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PETER THE CRUEL







BY THE SAME AUTHOR

MIRRORS OF ILLUSION



Peter I, King of Castile and Leon

PETER THE CRUEL

THE LIFE OF THE NOTORIOUS
DON PEDRO OF CASTILE TO-
GETHER WITH AN ACCOUNT OF
HIS RELATIONS WITH THE
FAMOUS MARIA DE PADILLA
BY EDWARD STORER   
WITH A FRONTISPIECE IN PHOTO-
GRAVURE AND SIXTEEN OTHER
ILLUSTRATIONS   

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To Miss A. de Alberti I offer my best thanks for her most kind and valuable assistance with the old Spanish text, and for the many suggestions in respect of which I and my book are much her debtors.

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E. S.

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PETER THE CRUEL

PETER THE CRUEL

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

IT is more than one hundred years ago, as far as I can be sure, since any one in England has written a book on the subject of Peter the Cruel.

In France, for more than half a century, writers seem to have left him alone with his cruelties, his loves, and his legendary fame beneath the splendid mausoleum of Mérimée's work.

In Spain, as might be expected, he has more often troubled the learned and caught the attention of the frivolous. In that land, as is natural, he continues to interest the poets, the playwrights, and the historians.

In truth, in dealing with him one moves in good company, for Calderon ¹ and Dumas ² among others have written of the cruel King of Castile.

His earliest biographer was his contemporary Pedro Lopez de Ayala, from whose courtly chronicle the greater part of all that follows is directly or indirectly taken.

From being page to Don Pedro, Ayala, who was a

¹ "El médico de su honra."

² "Le bâtard de Mauléon."

most distinguished gentleman, rose to be Grand Chancellor of Castile.

In 1788, Sir John Dillon wrote a life, and produced certainly the most important, if not the only, account of him in English.

In 1847, the author of *Carmen* turned his attention towards the subject of this memoir, partly, it would seem, at the invitation of his friend the Comtesse de Montijo,¹ who, perhaps from patriotic motives, wished Don Pedro to be shown again to the world in as goodly a guise as might be.

M. Mérimée found his task no light one. In his letters to the Countess, he tells her that the attempted restoration of the King's character is proving a very difficult task. Once he speaks of him as "this poor devil of a King, who had the misfortune to be born a century too late," and again, in a moment of despair with his task, he refers to him as "*mon ennemi, Don Pèdre*." He did his best for his friend, the Countess, as he did his best for his "enemy Don Pedro." The extent of his research, and the untiring energy which he gave to the work, take away the breath of the humble follower in his footsteps. To gather materials for his history, he journeyed to three countries, and he concluded his labours with the modest hope that posterity would admire at the least his industry.

One does indeed admire it, and, further, must avail oneself liberally of its fruit, without, however, too troublesome a conscience, for, after all, he took from the others, as one takes from him.

¹ The Empress Eugénie.

And as for Ayala, who, like myself, for good or ill has "gone to't in rhyme," ¹ he, I am sure, will make me welcome of his chronicle, for the sake of her whom in our several ways we have sought to love.

Be that as it may, with an impertinence that is at any rate well meant, I turn to him and the others in the dimness of the past, and take off my hat, and bow with what grace I can command :—

MY DEAR AUTHORITIES : your very humble Servant !

It was when Edward III. was reigning in England, and when John the Good was reigning in France, that Don Pedro the Cruel was born.

The year 1333 gave to the world this extraordinary man, the son of King Alfonso XI. This was a time when chivalry was growing decadent, and yet a time chivalrous and feudal and mediæval enough, as we shall see.

For if the perfect flower of chivalry was a little time-weary and wind-blown, there was as yet no newer ideal ready to delight men's minds.

Not yet had the Renaissance stirred.

The old convention lingered, and if but few believed in its sanctity with the whole-hearted fervour of other days, there it was, cumbering mankind—an ideal grown old, like a faithful servant, whom one hesitates to put away.

For it can hardly be doubted that it was the idealising instinct in man, strong, and ancient, and ineradic-

¹ "Rimado de Palacio."

able, that evolved the complicated system of chivalry. It was this instinct that made of war, slaughter, and violent death, disguised with a host of honourable and romantic trappings, a kind of pleasant illusion and romance, in which acquisitive and ideal instincts could be satisfied at one and the same time.

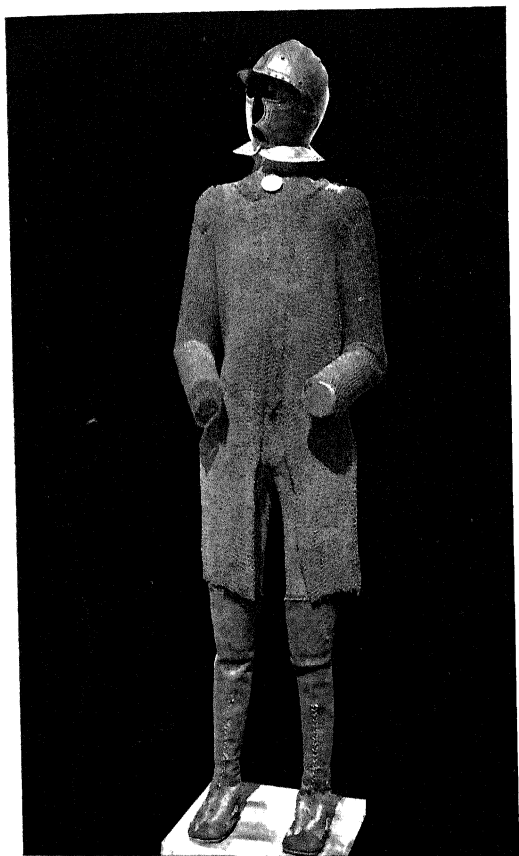
This came about naturally enough, for war was almost the only outlet open to the romantic instinct, which was at the same time available for every gentleman of the land.

In these latter days of chivalry, however, not much of the romantic part of the matter remained. In practice, the unidealism of the subject had been too often shown. And so, only the bare husk and convention were left, and the warriors of the time fought, to a great extent, disillusioned about any mystical beauties there may have been in their military religion.

The invention of gunpowder has generally been adduced as the influence which broke down the chivalry of the middle ages, but it decayed as much from its own over-ripeness as from anything else. Yet though it was passing, in 1333 or so, many of its chief incidents yet remained.

The fourteenth century still deals with tournaments and knights in armour. There is still the old phantasmagoria of mediævalism, a thing which it is hard to see without some enshrouding sentimental glamour; a thing which it is impossible broadly to conceive without it. Though the old order was decaying, it was not gone.

As a rule, knight only fought with knight, and



TYPE OF CHAIN ARMOUR IN USE IN THE PENINSULA TOWARDS END
OF FOURTEENTH CENTURY

squire with squire, though there are instances to be found in which this strict canon of etiquette was abrogated. Still, a chevalier's unknightly conduct was made the object of an elaborate ritual of disgrace. Heraldry still flourished, and the heavy mail armour, and the cumbrous pomp and machinery of war.

The weapons in general use were still the wooden lance, the sword, the battle-axe, and the dagger. To these Spain added another weapon especially her own. Her genetours or javelin-throwers were an arm of war not in universal employment in Europe. Their use is said to have been due to the wars between the Spanish kingdoms and the Moors, though it is, perhaps, possible to see in them some relation to the weapons of some of the legions which Cæsar led into Spain. England, and later the other countries, had of course archers as well.

Yet some of the most picturesque incidents of the old order had vanished. The troubadours and *jongleurs*, or, as they were called in Spain, the *trovadores* and *juglares*, those romantic and charming figures of the early middle ages, were silent now and forgotten. Music had drifted into the towns to form itself into companies and associations in the peace of calm, respectable burgherdom. No more along the sunny ways of Provence and Spain wandered the Bohemian noble and his *jongleur*. In vain would a romantic girl of the time have looked for the passing of one of those charming Knights, those gay and laughing Lords, of whom she had heard so much in tale and legend from her nurse's lips.

Alas ! he could never come. He was a respectable fellow now, master or member, as the case might be, of some mediæval *confrérie des ménestriers*. Only a few remained, the true rebels and inconvertibles. Pierre Vidal lay in the earth of France with the story of a hundred loves locked in his heart ; the vielles and rebecs of Geoffroi Rudel, of Riquier, and Améric de Pegulhan were broken, or lost and forgotten in some dusty cupboard or other.

What names they had, some of these primitive songsters, these little throstle-singers that introduced the nightingales of the Renaissance.

Améric de Pegulhan ! it is like a glass of Château Lafitte !

Thibaud de Champagne ! Allow me, Madame, to introduce the Chevalier Thibaud de Champagne. A courtly and admirable fellow, on whom, were you a lady of the Middle Ages, you would surely be pleased to smile.

But if they took a less active interest in music in the fourteenth century, this was not the case with war.

It was a crude enough thing though at this time. Chivalry had not lent itself to so plebeian a matter as science. Generally, the opposing armies blundered into each other, met with a terrific shock, and fought till superior strength asserted itself. Often enough, the opponents had but the slightest idea as to their enemy's whereabouts.

Before Poitiers, for instance, the Black Prince and John of France were completely in the dark as to each other's position.

Commissariat arrangements were mainly a matter of plundering the enemy's lands. If one were successful in the fight, there was no necessity (as well as no means) of carrying provisions about ; if one were not successful, one did not require any commissariat at all. That was the way the tacticians of the period argued. Foot-soldiers came into greater prominence at this time. Their larger employment was due to the success of the English archers. But if war was crude, so were manners and morals, in Spain as well as elsewhere. There had been a university at Salamanca since the year 1234, but it was a poor thing, producing poor results. Learning throughout Europe was still almost an ecclesiastical monopoly. Du Guesclin, the Frenchman who was later to bring ruin to Don Pedro, could barely¹ read and write. When he was besieged in Rennes by the English, he had to give a message sent him by the Duke of Lancaster to another to read for him.

In 1333, the popes were dwelling at Avignon. At the time the subject of this memoir began to reign, Clement VI. was occupying the throne of St Peter.

Europe was still in a very rude and barbarous condition. An immense and Cimmerian ignorance was the lot of the common people in every country ; and in Spain, perhaps, more especially than in some other lands—Italy, for instance, where even then the first little sparks of that great blaze of spiritual activity—the Renaissance—were beginning to glow.

¹ He could sign his name. See Lettenhove, "Etude sur le XIV. siècle," tome ii. p. 25.

Giotto was born about this time, and Spinello; Cimabue had lived and died, and as no art comes parentless into the world, there must have been some earlier Giottos and Spinellos, working obscurely, perhaps, in some goldsmith's shop in some far and dusty garret of Florence or Sienna, producing the first tentative paintings on gold backgrounds.

Chaucer was born about this date, and fruitful Italy had already mothered her Dante, her Boccaccio, and her Petrarch.

The lover of Laura was a young man, studying life and letters at Avignon in the year that Don Pedro of Castile was born.

As to any trace of art in Spain itself at this time, the names only of a few primitives have come down to us.¹ Nor were these Castilians, for that land was mute and sterile until the fifteenth century. Spain differed from the other feudal lands at this period in that its feudalism was of a less harsh and rigid type. There was something in its social aspect more democratic, more generous, and more sympathetic. This was due to that alien race which had served to knit Lord and Servant, *Ricos Hombres* and their vassals into a common humanity united against a common foe. The subconscious, inherited memories of their struggles against the Moors had left for man and master the feudalism of Spain, chastened, broadened, and different from that of any other in Europe. Corresponding in some measure with our Knights and

¹ Marzal in Valentia; Zuera in Aragon.—*Diccionario historico de las bellas artes en España.*

Squires, were the *Ricos Hombres* and the *Hidalgos* of Spain; the former being much in the position of Lords or Counts. They had the privilege of a banner with their arms, and a caldron depicted thereon. The banner signified their right to raise arms, and the caldron was a homely, heraldic emblem to suggest the wearer's capability of sustaining his warriors. The *Ricos Hombres* were allowed the title of Don. Both of these orders were privileged in many ways. The *Hidalgos*, for instance, were immune from arrest for debt, were allowed to remain seated in courts of judicature, and were exempt from all the viler forms of punishment, such as torture.

A notable feature of Spanish military and political life at this time is her Great Military Orders. There seems little doubt that their origin is to be found in the establishment of such semi-religious, semi-military organisations during the time of the Crusades.

"The Hospitallers and especially the Templars," says Burke, in his "History of Spain," "had obtained greater possessions in Spain than in any other part of Europe, and it was partly upon the ruins of their rich commanderies that arose the three-fold glory of the great Spanish Orders." These orders were those of Calatrava, Santiago and Alcantara, and, next to the King himself, were probably the most important estates in the land. For they claimed both ecclesiastical and temporal recognition, and consequently were doubly fortified and formidable in this security. Ultimately, the choice of their Grand Masters rested with the Pope, to whom they paid a spiritual homage,

not untinged with that temporal devotion which Rome and Avignon were always ready to accept.

According to Burke, the following are the military orders of ancient chivalry now existing, namely :—

Those of Calatrava, Santiago, Alcantara, Christ, (Portugal), Seraphim (Sweden), Garter, and Golden Fleece.

At the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Spanish Peninsula was divided into five kingdoms, namely, those of Castile, Aragon, Navarre, Portugal and Granada, four Christian lands and one Moorish : five lands that were never at complete peace with each other for any great length of time. Treaties followed treaties, and alliance succeeded alliance quite regularly, but the shadow of war was never very far away.

War in Spain, as in nearly every country of Europe, was the principal business of the nation. Trade existed, even international trade, but it was conducted with risk, almost in a kind of secrecy, and must have been extremely precarious. We read numerous petitions from different monarchs to King Edward III., complaining of piratical treatment at the hands of his subjects.

Sir John Dillon says : “ The English at this time wanted to trade to foreign parts, but would not suffer foreigners to come peaceably to theirs.”

Barcelona was doing some considerable trade in spices at this period with other countries. Indeed, the entire trade of Spain was in advance of that of England at this date, and it was to a kingdom well situated for commerce, and blessed with safe and valuable ports, that Peter the Cruel succeeded.

Castile, no less than Aragon and other parts of Spain, was rich in iron, copper, and even silver mines, which were very productive.

In another direction, Spain showed at this period a more tolerant and civilised attitude than many other countries.

While the Jews were subject to a rabid persecution under the rule of King Edward III, the payment of a tribute—fixed with a sense of poetic justice at thirty pieces of silver—ensured them in Spain peace and security.

And what kind of court do we find at Seville at this time ?

A court full of treachery and dissoluteness.

“ The licentiousness of manners was extreme,” says Mérimée. Even the clergy showed no better example.

The *barraganas de clerigos* or priests’ ladies were a recognised body, occupying a special position in the social life of the land, and made the object of peculiar and class laws.

Nor did Castile lack in the person of Don Pedro a royal exemplar of dissolute living.

A cruel man and a lustful : that is what he seems to have been. The apologies for him can, at the best, only modify and in some degree explain his evil habits. Mérimée, who did his best for him, can make no hero of him, and behind the lace and lawn of delicate excuse, and out of the atmosphere of palliation, he frowns at us, a grim, ferocious, interesting, vital figure, so much like the traditional Peter the Cruel as to be almost identical.

His apologists range from the amiable but fatuous Berni y Catala, who is reduced to vindicating Peter by means of a vision of a certain friend of his in which Peter triumphantly ascended into Heaven, to the modern, enthusiastic, and scholarly Don Joachim Guichot. Catalina Garcia, the author of the latest Spanish history of these times, professes to admire Guichot's work, but this may be the politeness of one Academician to another, for he disagrees almost everywhere, and gives Guichot many sly thrusts in his footnotes.

Ayala, Peter's chronicler, has often been accused of prejudice, because he wrote his life under the protection of his successor and overthrower, but, allowing even for this negative evidence of Don Pedro's claim to a better memory in men's minds, it is inconceivable that Ayala's record is fundamentally untrue, supported as it is by all the other contemporary writers of France and England.

All the apologists of Peter, Sotomayor, the Conde de la Roca, Ledo del Pozo, Xavier de Salas, Aureliano Guerra, and the rest do little more than suggest better motives and circumstances more mitigating for Peter than are obvious: they cannot touch Ayala's facts.

So, not as the discoverer of a new Pedro do I write, nor as any Cortez of his nobility and virtue, but as one, who, with the hand of charity, draws back the curtain of old days, and bids, within his measure, upon the boards of history the pomp and bravery of an ancient time sweetly to come and go.

CHAPTER II

THE THRONE OF HIS FATHERS

WHILE Alfonso XI. of Castile was with his army besieging the Moors in Gibraltar, his son Pedro was living in retirement with his mother in Andalusia.

Maria and her son were no longer in favour with the King, and, though she was his lawful wife, and Pedro his only legitimate son, Alfonso gave all his affection and favours elsewhere.

The name of the beautiful woman who had estranged the royal heart from its legitimate devotion was Leonor.

Historians have drawn pictures for us of her beauty, and in the tapestries of old legends and poems she is traced out as a clever and elegant woman of remarkable loveliness.

For her and her children all honour : castles, titles, the rarest apparel, and the most noble robes that the times could devise ; but for the discarded wife and her little son neglect, snubs from King and courtiers, and an existence clouded by the feeling of being unpopular and unnecessary.

Maria had early lost the affections of Alfonso, who had found in the charming Leonor a resting-place for

the frequently fickle and errant passions of a King. And so in a household, perhaps often alarmed with the tears and protestations of an unhappy Queen, Peter the Cruel spent his boyhood. There, he received to a large degree an education at the hands of a woman who was neglected and unhappy, so that his very earliest years must have been spent in an atmosphere of grievances, deceits, and the small mean stratagems which must almost inevitably make up a large part of the life of any court party which happens to be unpopular.

Thus, while his half-brothers, Enrique and Fadrique, lived in freedom and accompanied their royal father to war or to the chase, Don Pedro stayed at home in a household whose circumstances and conditions were distinctly unsuitable to the upbringing of a fourteenth century Prince.

Freedom, companionship and sympathy were what such a nature as his needed, a chance to expand, an opportunity to mould a passionate nature into strength, not the occasion to repress it and throw it inwards.

Here, on the very threshold, is, I think, the only apology for Peter's later habit of life which is worth troubling about, if apologies are worth anything at all, which is at least debatable. It is small wonder that such a boyhood helped to produce such a manhood. It would have been strange if it had produced anything else in those times and circumstances.

But in the year 1350, when Peter was fifteen years and seven months old, and therefore, according to

Spanish law, by the odd months the master of his majority, Fate intimated a rearrangement.

Alfonso XI. was before Gibraltar with an army, demanding the surrender of the fortress from the Moors. Long and obstinately did the Christians fight for the lowering of the Crescent and the surrender of the garrison, but the Mussulmans displayed an extraordinary courage and energy in defence.

King Alfonso was urged by his generals to raise the siege, because of the consternation caused in camp by an attack of the Plague then sporadic throughout Spain, but he persistently refused. The danger to his own royal person was explained to him, but "he begged them not to press such counsel on him, for he believed that he had brought that noble town and fortress to the point of surrender and hoped to recover it in a short space ; for it had been won by the Moors and lost by the Christians in his reign, and it would be a great shame to him thus to abandon it for fear of death." ¹

With him at this time were his natural sons, Enrique and Fadrique, tasting for the first time the excitement of war.

Suddenly the Black Plague which was raging all over the Peninsula at the time, picked out the leader of the Christian host for a victim, and Alfonso XI. died.

Immediately confusion followed. The props and stays of a score of cabals fell to earth ; generals and ministers looked at their commissions and portfolios to

¹ Ayala, Ann. 1350, Cap. I.

find them little better than waste paper. Rich lords gazed longingly at coveted lands, castles and dignities ; the secured became restless, the indigent hopeful. In other countries, old treaties were perhaps turned up to see whether it would pay better to keep or to break them. The military looked to the edges of their swords. The *Ricos Hombres* and *Hidalgos*, the courtiers and statesmen knew that a period of unrest must now follow a period teeming with the strangest possibilities.

The first result of the king's death was the raising of the siege of Gibraltar, the cessation of hostilities, and the signing of a treaty of peace on advantageous terms with the Mussulmans.

So greatly had the deceased sovereign impressed his African foes with his military prowess and knightly character, that his death became the occasion of a great tribute of respect and homage to his honour on their part.

Among the first to realise the consequences of Alfonso's death, was Leonor de Guzman, whose quick sensibilities made her aware of the dangerous possibilities latent in the new order of things. To be the acknowledged mistress of a powerful and popular prince is, when he dies, to be perhaps rather less than nobody. Legitimacy and rights were with Don Pedro, with Pedro and his unhappy mother Maria, but it would have to be seen what the great nobles of the land thought before Leonor accepted her position as a nonentity.

Among the men who stood at the head of things in

Castile at this time, were Don Juan Alonso de Alburquerque and Don Juan Nuñez de Lara, Lord of Biscay.

Alburquerque was by origin a Portuguese. He had offered his sword and services to the late king with, says the historian Mariana, entirely interested motives. After all, there is nothing wonderful in that ; the very essence of a courtier's life is interest.

Thus the nobles, a host of lesser lords, and the people of Spain found themselves wondering what was going to happen, when Alburquerque with the Queen-mother, Maria, declared Don Pedro king.

With whatever motives or ideas it had been, Alburquerque had definitely succeeded in making himself King Alfonso's right-hand man. He had become Prime Minister, and Grand Chancellor, and, as such, was naturally more than the rest of the folk in Castile at the time interested in immediate developments.

With Leonor de Guzman he had played a careful part, seeking her favour so much as it might help him to stand well with the king, but appearing never to forget at the same time that the real Queen of Castile was a certain unfortunate lady called Maria. Leonor, however, was not deceived by such diplomacy, and had no difficulty in placing him almost from the first among her enemies.

Don Juan Nuñez de Lara was a noble who in his youth had been a rebel against the late king, but had ended by becoming one of his most faithful counsellors.

In De Lara's veins flowed the royal blood of Castile, for he was a grandson of Don Alfonso X.

A third man, younger than either Alburquerque or the Lord of Biscay, was Don Fernando, Infante of Aragon, Marquis of Tortosa, a scion of the royal House of Aragon and an ineffectual pretender to its throne. He had sought in Castile an alternative happiness and peace to the troublous joys he was not quite capable of attaining in Aragon.

Of him Mérimée pointedly says: "An alien to Castile by birth, and to Aragon by the banishment to which he was condemned after his unsuccessful enterprise, he still remained a distant pretender to those two crowns, and preserved his illusory importance by serving any faction ready to make use of his name to advance its private interests."

In these three men moved the spirit and energy which was to come and direct the destiny of Castile in the next few years. In the ultimate resolution of their respective ambitions and characters was to be found the fortune of their country in its immediate future.

Alburquerque, trained by his experience as Minister to the late king, and keener-witted and cooler, perhaps, than either of his rivals, took the chances into his own hands and shaped them forthwith for himself. With the consent and assistance of the Queen-mother, he proclaimed Don Pedro king. When the news of this act was borne to her, the beautiful Leonor de Guzman felt that her position had become perilous indeed, and shut herself up in the walled town of

Medina Sidonia, where she awaited with much agitation of mind the arrival of that funeral procession which was slowly creeping up the land from Gibraltar.

It came at length, a long and gloomy cavalcade of fourteenth century warriors, escorting the bier of a dead general and king, but not a heart among the whole host of them fuller of inquietude and unhappiness than hers, whereon that cold and silent head of the bier had so often rested.

She who has loved a monarch, it may be said, has indeed loved her own age. She has been mistress to an epoch as well as to a man, and when the royal lover dies she who wore his love is, in a manner, twice widowed.

The approach of the cavalcade was the signal for several things to happen. The honour of being the governor of my Lady's castle was little honour now : almost indeed a perceptible treason against the new *régime*. Thus did it come to pass that Alfonso Fernando Coronel, who had held Medina Sidonia for Leonor, hastened to lay his resignation in her hands. She was sorely grieved and troubled when she perceived that all her vassals and friends were forsaking her, and she said to Coronel : " In truth, my friend and comrade, you render back my city in troublous times, for now I know not of any man who will hold it for me." ¹

She turned to the Lord of Lara with, we may imagine, a request for pity in her eyes and the suggestion of

¹ Ayala, 1350, Cap. III.

treason not far from her lips. Had she not a son who was also of age—Don Enrique? As well might Castile be ruled by an Enrique as by a Pedro. But the Lord of Lara, being a cautious and far-seeing man, received the lady's advances with every degree of coldness, and, murmuring a fervent aspiration for Don Pedro's future welfare, hurried away.

So humbled in the new order of things did Leonor become, that she was compelled to ask a safe-conduct to Seville, where, it is thought, all the rich jewellery which had come to her from King Alfonso was hidden.

And the young Princes, Enrique and Fadrique, found, that even as their mother Leonor was suddenly become a person of but little consequence, they too from popular princelings had changed in a day to pretenders of doubtful fortune. Everywhere among the high-placed of the land there was change and alteration. Though many of the old officers were confirmed in their appointments under the new government, those whom circumstances had taken away from Seville at the moment of the new King's accession lost their positions by reason of the fact that an accidental absence was construed as a traitorous one.

To a little, weak, wayward prince, whose character was yet in the making, legally of age, though actually only fifteen, Alburquerque appeared as yet only in the rôle of tutor, and seemed, therefore, the most natural man in the world to govern his kingdom for him. A serious and over-grave old gentleman, this latter,

who would doubtless appear to Don Pedro to take the world somewhat too solemnly. His mother Maria he knows as a woman whose tears have turned at last into decently-veiled smiles. Leonor is but a beautiful and mysterious stranger, whom he once saw, and has often heard of since. Enrique and Fadrique are brothers he has rarely met.

CHAPTER III

ALBURQUERQUE'S CHANCE

THIS was the moment for Alburquerque. He had a young king not yet awake to the life and possibilities of kingship, a Queen-mother whose ambitions were largely circumscribed by her desire for revenge, and a host of political parties and factions each seeking to advance itself without any consideration for the fortunes of any other.

Out of this pother and distress, Alburquerque, the strong man, carved his own fate.

De Lara was, if not entirely friendly, at any rate not menacing. He was cool and courteous, and had shown in his dealings with Leonor that he had no mind to spoil his chances by too precipitate a move.

Leonor herself was really dangerous. Alburquerque knew her for a quick-witted woman, as her first move proved.

During the late king's life, she had arranged the espousal of his son, Enrique, to Doña Juana de Villena, a niece of Don Juan Nuñez.

This match, although it was well enough in its way, as a kind of speculative alliance, for the Lara family during the life of the late king, became, on his

decease, and the accession of Pedro, a quite different matter.

Albuquerque wanted none of it ; neither did the Lord of Biscay. They had other plans in view for the young lady who was only the customary chattel of such fourteenth century bargaining.

The way in which such matrimonial affairs were suggested, carried out, or set on one side as the case might be, quite eclipses the most remarkable commercial efforts of modern times in this direction.

Marriage was a great political instrument in those days as, indeed, it has been in most, and a sovereign's death, a rebellion, or an outbreak of war were generally the signal for a regular epidemic of betrothals among the royalty and nobility of feudal Europe.

The suggested alliances resulting from King Alfonso's death make a complicated and not unamusing study. The most unlikely people received sudden proposals, and the widowhood of Maria herself, barely a week or two old, was subjected to a direct matrimonial attack.

The Queen-mother was barely accustomed to her mourning, before she, the snubbed and ignored of the last few years, found courtiers and lovers waiting anxiously at her castle gates.

Both the Infante Don Fernando of Aragon, and Don Juan de Lara sought to strengthen their pretensions to the throne by effecting a marriage with Maria, who had herself in her own right, certain claims to advance, which were not too vague to be incapable of creating civil war.

She was the great-grand-daughter of Alfonso the Wise.

Among other matches which were speedily suggested was the alliance of the Infante of Aragon with Doña Juana de Villena, who, we have just seen, was required by Leonor for her son Enrique—with the provision of course, in the minds of the Lara faction, that, if they could marry Juana to King Pedro himself instead of to the young Prince of Aragon, then so much the better.

Naturally enough, most of these suggested alliances did not mature.

But one of them did actually pass from contemplation into actuality. Leonor, the wise and beautiful Leonor, had young Juana de Villena in her own guard and company.

The girl had known her for years, and stood almost in the position of daughter to her.

While Albuquerque and the rest made plans, the woman acted. Enrique and Juana were married, and no amount of anger or oratory could unmarry them.

The marriage was celebrated and consummated in the palace which served Leonor as a prison, before any of the parties interested in preventing it were aware of the fact.

Of course they were very angry when they heard the news; and their displeasure was not so unimportant that Leonor could afford to incur it. Indeed, it may be that in outwitting her enemies by this move, she also wrote the first lines of her own death-sentence.



DOÑA JUANA, CONDESSA DE TRASTAMARA, AFTERWARDS QUEEN JUANA

Mother and son and the young bride separated ; Leonor to be imprisoned with the utmost rigour in the castle of Carmona ; Enrique to wander as a fugitive through Spain, till he reached a haven among the mountains of the Asturias. A picturesque and romantic escapade, this flight of Enrique and his wife, accompanied by their faithful knights whose names have come down to us, to wit, Pero Carillo and Juan Rodriquez de Señabria. With leathern masks on their faces, and fully armed, they must surely have presented a desperate enough sight for even a fourteenth - century countryside. It would seem that the young wife accompanied her husband on this journey. Perhaps, dressed as a boy, she made a fourth in that engaging company, with the patient Pero to help her into the saddle, and the honourable Rodriquez to select a comfortable-looking tree for her to sleep under.

The details of this journey are not to be found in Ayala, nor indeed anywhere else that I know of, which is, perhaps, a pity. It would have been good reading, for we are told that the journey was "adventurous."

Froissart would surely have given it in full, had he been chronicling the period.

With the redoubtable Leonor safe in prison, Alburquerque felt his way clearer, and set himself to form a ministry, of which he was, of course, the leader. Don Juan de Lara was made Alferez Mayor (Grand Standard Bearer) and Grand Major Domo : offices

which were more solid and valuable than these titles seem to suggest.

Meanwhile, in addition to taking a wife, and of course before his flight into the Asturias, Don Enrique had found time to engage in an unsuccessful attempt to effect a small revolution.

In Algeciras, where he had originally gone after his return with his father's body to Medina Sidonia, he had endeavoured to win the town and people to his party. But mindful of the horrors of earlier civil wars, Algeciras, in company with almost the whole country-side, showed a peaceful disposition to accept established authority that must have been very trying to a born pretender and revolutionary like Don Enrique.

An envoy of king Pedro dispatched from Seville managed to effect a secret entrance into the town, and sounded the burghers on their feelings. He returned to report, that it required but the royal flag to be shown outside Algeciras for the entire place to declare for King Peter.

In a day or two some galleys commanded by one Gutier Fernandez de Toledo came into the port.

The crews raised the cry "Castile! Don Pedro for ever!" with such success for the royal cause, that the citizens, delighted to think that, after all, their money and merchandise might not be squandered in an unnecessary quarrel, while they themselves were put to the sword, rushed down to meet the ships with every degree of enthusiasm.

Drawbridges were lifted; up went the royal standard; Algeciras stood out for king Peter and death to all traitors! It was then that the adventurous Enrique escaped to get married.

This matter of Algeciras was another thing to strengthen the hands of Albuquerque who was gradually getting all the loose threads of power into his own hands. The prospect of internecine strife was, for the time being, at anyrate, removed. The dangerous Leonor was safe in prison; his rival, Don Juan Nuñez, kept for the moment in peace and satisfaction by inclusion in the ministry; the young king at present tractable and well-disposed towards his old tutor. Everything, in fact, seemed to point out for Albuquerque a long lease of authority.

When, suddenly, Don Pedro fell ill, dangerously ill, so ill that he was held as good as dead, and the important question of the succession became the only subject of interest.

All the old wounds in the State were once more opened; the fever of ambition and greed burned again in the hearts of the courtiers and *Ricos Hombres*; new cabals at once arose from the stems of old and dying ones, and a dozen factions were engendered in half as many days. While Maria watched over her son in the palace at Seville, with a heart full of anguish and despair, throughout the entire land were nothing but rumours and talk of war.

Albuquerque was engaged in raising troops, "and

amassing money for the casualties of the struggle which might commence at any moment."

Anarchy was on the point of breaking out in the kingdom ; bands of robbers and marauders profited by the unsettledness of the times to pillage and destroy.

" All payments out of the King's privy purse were suspended, nor was there any longer any respect shown to authority."

The unfortunate populace felt that civil war was to come after all, and the wise debated on which side it was advisable to range themselves.

From the many factions and cabals, there arose at last two clearly-defined pretenders-presumptive during this illness of Castile's boy king. These were Don Juan Nuñez de Lara and Don Fernando, Infante of Aragon. The first offered himself as a possible king of Castile on the strength of his being a great-grandson of King Alfonso X. The Infante of Aragon based his claim to popular and knightly consideration on the fact that his mother had been Doña Leonor, eldest sister of the late King Alfonso, who had been recognised by the Cortes as heiress-presumptive before the birth of her brother.

Albuquerque gave his sympathies to the Infante of Aragon, because no good could possibly come to him from the success of the Lord of Biscay and his party. He fancied that if this young prince were put upon the throne, he would be Prime Minister as before ; only to a Fernando instead of to a Pedro.

A young and inexperienced princeling suited him better than a man like Don Juan Nuñez de Lara, from

whom, in the event of his success, he could hope for little authority or favour. Fernando of Aragon, being a foreign prince, did not appeal to the popular imagination ; the populace, inasmuch as they cared for the thing at all, were mostly in favour of Don Juan. This was especially the case with regard to the northern provinces.

Among the unfortunate *Ricos Hombres* in Castile who were supporting the cause of De Lara were Garci Laso de la Vega, the Adelantado of Castile, a sort of Commander-in-Chief and Lord Chief Justice combined, and, in the South, Don Alonso Coronel. The position of things favoured De Lara, and it looked as though the newly-lit flame of Alburquerque's fortune was in danger of extinguishment.

War was ready to break out ; a rumour of Don Pedro's death ; a reported outrage ; a word from the leaders of either side would have thrown the entire land into the bitterness and horror of a civil war, when the unexpected occurred.

Don Pedro did not die. He made a sudden and rapid recovery.

And so twice in his short reign we have seen the land saved as by a miracle from a fratricidal war.

We learn, however, that, even despite Don Pedro's return to health, the two rival parties would not have been able to keep from attacking each other, if the plague had not once more interposed, and claimed Don Juan de Lara and the Lord of Villena, his nephew, as victims.

Thus, through a multitude of risks and dangers,

Don Pedro came to grasp now with a little more security the sceptre of Castile, and Alburquerque, rid at one stroke of his most dangerous rivals, found the tangled threads of power straight and unravelled in his hands.

The tutor of a king and his pupil now faced things with a clearer and brighter hope.

Little king and grave, astute, old courtier, Castile is in your hands. What will you do with it ?

Tutor and pupil, behold here a wide and extensive exercise for both your wits !

CHAPTER IV

A PORTRAIT OF PETER

PETER THE CRUEL, in the first years of his reign, is a person for whom one can easily entertain considerable sympathy.

He has the graces of youth, royalty, and a gorgeously Oriental manner of living, which makes him shine somehow as a be-jewelled, be-harem'd and fantastic Sultan of some old and exquisite Arabian fable.

As he goes, we catch the rosy shudder of rubies in his robes, and the pale and beautiful opals that he wears are like the frozen tears of the moon.

His loves and his cruelties are as ponderous arabesques, which, quite fittingly, it seems at times, decorate his life. And when heads fall, and the air hisses with death-dealing steel, or when Peter turns amorous in extravagant, Eastern fashion, one comes almost to think that it did not happen, or happened only in a pleasant, exotic, Harun-'al-Raschid way.

Thus, at times, one can forgive him many things : they are so perfectly in the picture.

Peter, during the last years of his life, is a quite revolting and even absurd figure, for whom sympathy is hardly possible.

Towards the very end, almost the only interest one can feel in him is a pathological one.

Till those last few chapters, however, we can find pleasure in him as a man, fighting, loving and living much as might anybody else.

Let us hear what the historians tell us of his personal appearance.

“He was fair-skinned, comely, and fair-haired; haughty in his bearing and distinguished by an air of majesty. He gave evidence of possessing great virtues, daring, and prudence. No hardship could bend his body nor difficulty daunt his spirit. His chief delight was falconry and hawking, and in matters of justice he was perfect. His vices, which were as great as his virtues, early inspired forebodings which increased with his years. He scorned and slighted others, and listened with arrogance to the speech of his inferiors. He gave audience with difficulty, not only to strangers but even to those of his own household. These were the vices of his youth, to which years added avarice, a dissolute sensuality, and an extreme harshness of temper and manners.”

That is what Mariana says of Don Pedro. From which it will be seen that it is, after all, a man with whom we have to deal in spite of all his wickedness and cruelty. Ayala, from whom the above is partly taken, adds that the king had a slight impediment in his speech. From him we also learn that Don Pedro “never suffered from any bodily aches and pains, not even toothache.”

Tradition says, that as he walked, his knees sometimes cracked, a circumstance which once placed him in a remarkable predicament, as we shall see later.



PETER THE CRUEL

Elsewhere it is stated that he was handsome, and again that he was not ; as in one picture of him he looks pleasant enough, and in another he resembles a portrait from a collection of criminals.

But at the time of his accession he must have been more like the man, tall, well-proportioned, of fair complexion and regular features, of whom Mariana speaks, than the crafty-looking villain of the frontispiece that he no doubt afterwards became.

“Regular features and in his manner a certain nobility and majesty.” That is probably more what he was like, when the land of Castile came into his kingly hands in those early years of his reign. Then he was unused to murder. The “sweet dying of enemies” was unknown to him. No death had “been like honey in the mouth,” as Theocritus has it.

He loved sport, hawking above all, and took a great pride in his falcons and their keeping.

Dogs were his delight, and he passed whole days racing about the country on horseback with them. Doubtless it was good then to be a king, even if only to have as many dogs and as many falcons as one liked, and to hunt and play every day in the week, if it so pleased one’s Majesty, without having to ask anyone’s permission.

Better, a good deal, than listening to a mother’s sighs, and gazing out of the palace windows for the happy times that never seemed to come.

It may be that Don Pedro thought old Alburquerque an infliction with his endless talk on state matters, and the condition of things in Andalusia, and what

to do with this man, and what with that. As when one day, soon after the young King's recovery, there came before him the matter of a journey to be undertaken to Estremadura. Then did Pedro begin to understand that life was not all an affair of falcons, especially for kings of Castile in the fourteenth century.

The young sovereign was in no particular hurry to make the journey, which was ostensibly for the purpose of receiving the submission and homage of his brother, Don Fadrique.

But Pedro had to learn that Alburquerque was something more than a minister : he was a minister who had to be obeyed.

It was on this expedition that Pedro gained his first insight into the conduct of political life in his own time.

In the train of the royal party there travelled the unfortunate Leonor de Guzman.

Don Fadrique, who was the Master of the military order of Santiago, gave his royal brother a welcome worthy of his rank. Everything that the luxury and taste of the times could afford was offered to Don Pedro, Alburquerque, and the Queen-mother.

There must have been a touch of bitterness in it all for the young host, who found his own mother as a prisoner in the hands of his guests and subject to the jealous vagaries of the Queen who, at heart, was still full of vengeance towards her fallen rival.

Maria had suffered an insult from Leonor, which women are proverbially accounted slow to forgive, and Maria was not likely to be more generous than

any other person in that age of open and unrestrained cruelty.

Leonor and her son flung themselves despairingly into each other's arms. In Ayala's beautiful words : "The mother took her son, the master, to her arms, and kissed him and wept with him for a full hour, and he with her ; and they spoke not a word to one another. Then those who guarded Doña Leonor told the master that he must come to the King, and he obeyed them, and he never saw his mother again after that day." ¹

Maria was soon to enjoy her vengeance. The bitterness of all those years of her deposal from position by the royal favourite was now to be assuaged. In one death would vanish all those ghosts of jealousy and hatred which had disturbed her peace so long.

To Talavera, a stronghold in her keeping, was the unfortunate Leonor sent.

There the deed of death was done by order of the Queen-mother, and Leonor, in the manner of her passing, paid for the years of happiness stolen from another.

The execution was private, and there is no evidence that Don Pedro was aware of it. Alburquerque could afford to wink at it, for the partisans of the unfortunate De Guzman were scattered now, and without a leader. The De Laras existed no longer to trouble the consciences of those in authority. Murder, like everything else in these times, was after all a matter of convenience. One cannot lay to Don Pedro's charge

¹ Ayala, 1351, Cap. III.

any of the odium of this crime. It was the deed of his mother—conceived, perhaps, long before, in some bitter hour of her dejection, and nursed through the sorrows of many an unhappy night.

Enrique and Fadrique were compelled to stand quietly by and hear of their mother's murder without raising a hand in her memory. Don Tello indeed, Leonor's third son, on hearing from the King that his mother was dead, for political reasons seems to have taken the matter with a calmness, not to say callousness, that was either bitterly cynical or, if genuine, rather pitiable.

"Don Tello," said the King, "do you know that your mother, Doña Leonor, is dead?"

"Sire," replied Tello, "I have no other father or mother than your Grace!"

As to the reception by the people of this execution, Ayala says: "Several in the kingdom were grieved at this deed, seeing that it would give rise to war as well as to scandal, Leonor having grown-up sons and many kinsmen."

Thus happened the first political murder in the reign of Peter the Cruel, and though we may absolve him of the guilt of its design, we may think that it was here he first began to see how extremely easy and useful a weapon assassination could be in the hands of despotic authority.

CHAPTER V

PETER'S FIRST MURDER

THE city of Burgos had opened its gates to receive its young king, not, indeed, without some trepidation and misgiving, and almost at the point of the sword. Only, indeed, had that point been lowered by counsels of polity, and the usual hatred of the mediæval bourgeoisie to that intolerable affliction of its time—useless war.

Burgos had declared, it appears, with some show of enthusiasm, for Don Juan Nuñez in the days when the crown of Castile lay by the sick bedside of the gravely-ailing monarch for the disposition of too-previous courtiers. And so it came to pass that tutor and scholar, minister and monarch, sat in the royal dining-room together at Burgos, while three unfortunate burghers, lamenting their lives and their gold, plodded mournfully to the scaffold.

Imagine the scene.

It was in the house of Fernan Garcia de Arcilza, where Alburquerque was lodging, that the dinner took place.

On the table there would be silver, pewter, and glass ware ; the silver of the elaborately chased and ornamental style typical of the Spanish goldsmiths' art. The table would be covered with a linen cloth,

not the fine, white linen of the best factories of our day, but a coarse, stronger stuff, for the use of this fabric became common in this century, which has been called "the century of linen."

Perhaps among the dishes which the Moorish servants brought to the royal table, there would be some birds, witnesses to the skill and passion of the royal sportsman.

The furniture of the apartment would be crude and roughly cut, though not without evidence of some desire on the part of its makers for elaboration and effect.

Probably there would be seen some of the carving, some of that arabesque work with which the Moorish occupation has so impregnated the entire art of Spain.

I do not think that we may expect these apartments actually to have contained pictures, though it is just possible. Perhaps something brought from France or Italy by an envoy or travelled courtier; perhaps a relic of some Court trovador's wanderings. Almost certainly nothing Castilian, for it is not until much later that we find any record of art there.¹

The hour of the meal would be about ten o'clock, for dinner at that time and supper at sundown was the order of things in Europe at the time.

And over the repast, when the shouts of the crowd came through the windows—the narrow, open slits that served for windows in those times—the Minister

¹ *Diccionario historico de las bellas artes. L'art espagnol: Lucien Solvay.*

would catch the eye of his young king and meet his concern with the calm cynicism of age and experience.

Outside the three bowed heads amid the raging rabble, and the executioner walking in front.

If the King could not actually see them, he was well aware of their presence.

This was the completion of his first murder.

Yesterday he began with one man—Garci Laso ; to-day three burghers must complete his vengeance.

For when, but a week before, it had been discovered in the recesses of Alburquerque's mind, that Burgos must be punished, the King and Court with something of an army had started out almost immediately on their mission. When the royal party drew near the walls of the city, Don Garci Laso de la Vega, one of the chief adherents of the late Don Juan Nuñez, moved out to meet the King.

He took with him in his feudal pride a considerable body of men-at-arms, and a great multitude of knights and squires. These set forth all bristling with swords and the best intentions not to be warlike, intentions capable, unfortunately for Garci, of a rather different construction.

As a number of these gentlemen, says the old chronicler, were poor relations of Garci Laso, it is probable that in their anxiety to stand well in his eyes, they overdid their attitude a little, and seemed to Alburquerque and the King more warlike than complimentarily picturesque. Fattened, no doubt, with the flesh of his flocks, and brave-hearted by the merit of his corn, they must have held their weapons

in a manner more suggestive of defiance than salutation.

It was not long before a quarrel arose from this meeting of the two forces.

Manrique, a creature of Alburquerque, in speaking with Laso, commenced brawling with him in the King's very presence, and the latent hostility of two large hosts of professional fighters soon turned into something imminent and actual.

Don Pedro, who had no mind to watch a useless battle just then, ordered their separation and the general observance of peace, which was preserved by those present with bad grace. Meanwhile the unfortunate burghers of the city saw in this aggregation of what they doubtless, in their hearts, considered professional ruffians, no good omen for their lives and property. They sent to the King a deputation pointing out the difficulties and trouble of their position, and begged him that he would not allow the presence of the two hostile armies together within the walls of Burgos.

They even went so far as to suggest that he himself should enter with only a small retinue—an idea that struck Pedro as impertinent.

The deputation—notoriously an unfortunate and tactless unit, which, generally speaking, either offends or is snubbed—seems on this occasion to have maintained the worst traditions of its type.

Its rigmarole of co-operative humility, its attitude of corporate respect, its “Most Honoured and Royal Sir,” and its “unworthy and humble servants” seem, as has often been the case, to have been taken

by the ardent young king for humbug and rhetorical hypocrisy.

When to the monarch's displeasure is added the sudden ire of the crafty Portuguese, it becomes easy to see that things will go badly for the burghers.

"We must give," said Alburquerque, "these arrogant burghers a lesson, and make an example of them in order to intimidate those who may be inclined to imitate their presumption."¹

Then the King's host was gathered together, and preparations were made to enter the city, if necessary at the point of the sword. No blood, however, was shed in making its way into Burgos by the army of Don Pedro; a show of colours and arms sufficing to reduce the possibility of resistance to nothing.

Manrique was sent on ahead and quartered his soldiers in the Ghetto "which, according to the custom of the age, was separated from the rest of the town by a strong wall and consequently formed an interior citadel." The "arrogant burghers" now felt that they had indeed invited a terrible misfortune, and prepared to deliver up their houses and sustenance for the billeting and feeding of Don Pedro's truculent warriors.

Burgos became like a military camp or a city in a state of siege. The residences of the clergy became hostels for the reception of various knights and men-at-arms. Garci Laso remained in the town to meet his fate, though he had then no suspicion of it. The fellow seems to have been a knight more in accordance

¹ Ayala, 1351, VI.

with ideal chivalry than many of the cut-throat opportunists of his day. With him was the adventurous and romantic Pero Carillo, whom we have already seen engaged in a perilous flight to the Asturias with Enrique and his young bride. The next time we meet him, we shall find him, true to his character, rescuing a noble lady in distress. And then, later still, Ayala will tell us his love story in a brief word or so. Probably this Pero was one of the few folk in Burgos at this time who were quite happy. We cannot think that Don Pedro was—assassination was then too new a trade to him; nor was Alburquerque, in whose bosom there could only have burned bitter thoughts; nor poor Garci Laso; nor even the Queen-mother, and by no means the burghers. But an adventurous chivalrous man like Pero would simply glory in being in so vexed and desperate a situation.

Poor Garci Laso, who would seem to have been a gentle, unsuspecting soul, went quietly about without showing recognition of the deadly peril in which his conduct and partnership with the late Lord of Biscay had placed him.

Even when there stole to him secretly by night a messenger, bearing a mysterious and cryptic warning, the communication was construed by him into something entirely different.

From the Queen-mother, who, disgusted with her one excursion into melodrama, or jealous perhaps of her son's possible usurpation of her ghastly rôle, or simply moved, perhaps, by simple human pity, Garci learnt that he must "let nothing on earth bring him

to the palace on the morrow, Sunday." Those are the actual words of the old chronicler, Ayala, who lived at the time and saw many of these things with his own eyes.

How like a sentence from Grimm's or Andersen's Fairy tales they sound! The visit that must never be made, the apple that must never be eaten, the dress never by any chance to be worn. And yet, as we read we know well enough, that the dreadful thing is going to happen—that the visit will be made, the apple eaten, and the fatal habit donned.

So it was with Garci Laso.

To the presence of Don Pedro on the next day he came, fearless and proud, with a clean conscience and an honest heart. Ah, Garci, had you had the blackest heart in all Castile, it would have gone no better with you on that day.

With him there came his two brothers-in-law, Ruy Gonzalez de Castañeda and Pero Ruiz Carillo.

Something violent and out of the ordinary was about to happen. Messengers went to and fro a trifle more eagerly than usual. The guard upon his beat suspected murder.

In the great hall, we learn, sat the King upon his throne, and round him were his esquires and the grave Alburquerque, who had a strange exercise that morning for his royal pupil. And just as Garci and his little suite came into the hall, there was a fluttering of silk and a rustling of women's gowns, as the Queen-mother, followed by her Chancellor—both in agitation—ran hurriedly from the apartment with averted eyes.

This departure of the Queen-mother became a signal for action. Rough hands were laid upon the three burghers, Alfonso Garcia, Pero Fernandez, and Alfonso his notary brother, who found themselves arrested and dragged out of the hall.

Alburquerque, who stood by watching the ripening of his plot, whispered to an alcade of the Court, by name Domingo Juan, who was near—

“Alcade, you know your duty,” he said, meaningly. But the alcade, who was no man of blood, turned to the King, and said to him in a low voice, although it was loud enough for Alburquerque to hear: “My lord, give this order yourself, for I will not.”

And Don Pedro, in a hesitating voice, like one repeating a lesson that had been conned beforehand, said:—

“Ballesteros, arrest Garci Laso.”

Laso, gripped by three esquires, and reading in the cold and nervous expressions of those present his own death sentence, stifled his excitement, and turned to meet his fate like a man. “Sire,” he said coolly to the king, “be pleased to give me a priest to whom I may confess. And Fernandez, my friend,” he added to one of the men whose hands were upon him, “will you go to Doña Leonor, my wife, and ask for that indulgence for a good death from the Pope which is in her keeping.”

Because a confessor happened to be near, Garci Laso was given time to shrive himself, but the indulgence for a good death remained with his wife.

While Laso was confessing, Alburquerque’s fingers

were twitching nervously from his anxiety to draw this unpleasant tension to a close. Into the King's ears he whispered a word or two, and Pedro, seeking to be done with the business as easily and as pleasantly as possible, delegated a delegate to dispatch Laso. But the blunt mace-bearer would have this death-sentence only from the royal lips, and to the King he went.

"What are we to do with this man, Sire," he asked, pointing with his club at the kneeling penitent in the corner.

Pedro felt Alburquerque's eyes on him.

"Kill him!" he said.

And then flew mace, and with a whirl in the air, and a crash, came death to Laso. Lest there should be any doubt, the other ballesteros dipped their daggers into the prostrate form.

And to complete this wretched scene, poor Garci's body was thrown into the arena of the bull-fight which was then in progress to celebrate Don Pedro's arrival.

The bulls treated it as might be expected, and then the mangled remains were laid on a bier on the ramparts, that all men in Castile might know how dangerous it was to be in the wrong.

CHAPTER VI

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

MANY matters had now arisen in Castile which demanded inquiry and settlement. The practical conditions of things, financial and political, needed a practical treatment and resolution. There were arrears of routine work to be wiped off ; petitions to be heard ; the necessary appointments to numerous small offices to be made. A Cortes was summoned to be held at Valladolid. This national assembly had no fixed place of convocation. The site of its session was a matter of convenience and the royal pleasure, a custom arising from the frequent presence of Mahomedan States in the peninsula. This seeming lack of dignity and instability in the Cortes of Spain was inevitable, even in the uncertain intervals of peace in those days, and naturally even more so in times of war.

But as to popular or constitutional government, Castile was quite as well off at this time as we were in England, although the Cortes did not put very much power into the hands of the people.

A notable statute which was passed into law by this Cortes and the King was a re-enactment of the Mortmain Laws of Alfonso X., which the clergy had managed to evade.

England, in 1279, had already thus legislated against the clergy and monastics, whose greed and craft was opposing itself to the power of the barons and feudal lords. Both in Spain and England these laws were merely the expression of the ambitions of one class against those of another, without any regard to the welfare of the people generally. Hallam, in his *History of the Middle Ages*, gives in a few lines an interesting sketch of the origin and development of Mortmain Laws, finding an example of them in the times of the Roman Emperors.

We are able to judge the relative positions of King and Cortes from the nature and manner of presentment of the petitions and resolutions which were laid before Don Pedro in this Assembly of 1351. There does not appear to be an instance in which any of the suggested reforms made even a pretence of basing their claims to acceptance on anything but purely private, personal, and individualistic motives.

So far, not the slightest suggestion that the people could have any claims or rights seems to have occurred to these old law-makers. The more fraternal and socialistic condition of life in Spain which, according to Mérimée and some other historians, was a feature of the Feudalism beyond the Pyrenees, plainly partook more of a social than of a political character.

No comments were made at the session of this Cortes by the representatives of Burgos at the strange doings so lately enacted within their city's walls.

Garci Laso found no defender of his memory. The rights of dead men stirred no consciences in that assembly. The Lara faction was under a cloud, but its members, if silent and unseen, were meditating a bitter vengeance. We have a rather full account of the happenings of this Cortes of Valladolid, and some of it makes interesting reading. The ecclesiastics produced a voluminous chapter of their wrongs with suitable prayers for their redress. They "insisted" upon the restitution of certain feudal rights, which they had had to forgo to provide the means for continuing the late war against the Moors.

Don Pedro, who was never a lover of priests, treated their mingled demands and requests very coldly, replying at times with the diplomatic evasiveness of a politician, at other times offering a blunt refusal.

In the matter of some salt-pits, for instance, the King was firm, and announced his intention of keeping them.

One of the grievances of the clergy was the desecration of the Sabbath by the Moors and Jews. They asked that these folk should be compelled to cease working in the streets.

Another matter under discussion was the difficulty of procuring labourers and the rate of wages demanded by them. The plague and the late war had so decimated the countryside, that the remaining peasants were asking wages of so exorbitant a nature as to terrify the purse-holders among the Squires and land-owners.

Where we now talk of a minimum wage, the Cortes spoke of a maximum.

Among the petitions, which came before the sovereign to be passed into law or set on one side, may be noticed the suggestions that Christian debtors should be empowered to make their Jewish creditors bankrupt, and that Jews should be prohibited from holding lands.

Among the laws to which Don Pedro, in the first flush of that authority which has earned for him the title *el Justiciero* as well as his more famous one, assented, we find abolitions of freedoms, the establishment of complete liberty to carry on any and every trade, the guarantee of individual liberty, and a law that the immunity from taxation of certain privileged folk should be abolished.

A census was also ordered for the collection of taxes, an undertaking rendered necessary by the devastations of the plague. A kind of final court of appeal was also established by this Cortes, whereby the right of every Castilian to carry his case before the Sovereign as a last resource was established.

Further, it was held that in criminal matters a man should receive the judgment of his own province, a fact which throws a curious light on the petty internal jealousy which must have existed between states and provinces, that could not trust each other to deal fairly with delinquents of other states than their own.

Extensive measures and precautions were taken against the brigandage which infested the land at the period, and a species of martial law over all Castile was temporarily proclaimed.

A civic guard was formed, and most active orders were made to bring about the cessation of this intolerable nuisance and disorder. This militia was restrained, however, at the same time by certain ordinances, devised to curb the anger and warlikeness of a people, always capable of being thrown at slight notice and for small cause into a state of civil war. Thus, these guards were not to pursue the brigands beyond a certain distance, and the extermination of the robbers was to be effected by "relays" of this rough and ready militia. By these means it was doubtless hoped to give it the constitution and character of a kind of police, rather than that of an avenging and ill-disciplined volunteer force.

The Crown and Alburquerque also saw to it that this newly-organised force should be available for royal and political purposes if need should be ; for they were "charged to fight against all rebels." Another matter which came before this assembly was a demand on the part of the inhabitants of Biscay and the maritime cities for the official recognition by the Cortes of a treaty of peace concluded by them with Edward III. of England.

These same Biscayans, although their loyalty and adherence to the King of Castile was a thing of no great stability, must have taken this step to obtain, through the adoption of the treaty by the Cortes, an additional sense of security from the roving ships of England. Commercial towns and especially those on the seaboard had, in nearly all countries, even when they formally made allegiance to the sovereign

of the land, a remarkable importance and independence of their own.

Another act of this Cortes was an intimation of its disfavour with the rate of the royal expenditure.

Even the bill of fare for the royal table was called into question, and fixed according to a definite standard of expenditure, a suggestion that subsequent Cortes followed in the cases of several later kings of Castile.¹

Among a variety of other ordinances and suggestions that never became law, we find requests to the king to hold in check the abuse of the power of excommunication possessed by the clergy, and to limit the penalties liable to fall on those who had incurred the displeasure of the church.

Simple matters, such as the rights of way, pasturage, customs dues, the conditions of export trade, mining and forestry were not beneath the discussion of this house of commons and peers.

One arrives at the end of all the debates and legislation of this body of representatives with a feeling of esteem for their good sense and diligence.

The enactments, taking them all round, seem just, sensible, and fair.

An account of the methods of procedure of this Cortes may be found in the History of Sir John Dillon, to which work I am indebted for most of the following particulars :—

The Cortes consisted of prelates and *Ricos Hombres*, together with the masters of the three military orders then existing in Castile. Seventeen cities also sent

¹ Dillon.

representatives of the people, usually two in numbers called *regidores*. Those from the cities of Burgos, Leon, Seville, Cordova, Murcia, and Toledo, which were large and important centres at the time, had a precedence over the representatives of the remaining cities, which consisted of Cuenca, Zamora, Galicia, Guadalaxara, Valladolid, Salamanca, Avila, Soria, Segovia, Toro, and Estremadura. At one end of the assembly was a seat for the king under a canopy, and near by, the honoured city of Toledo received for its representatives the privilege of a small bench richly carved.

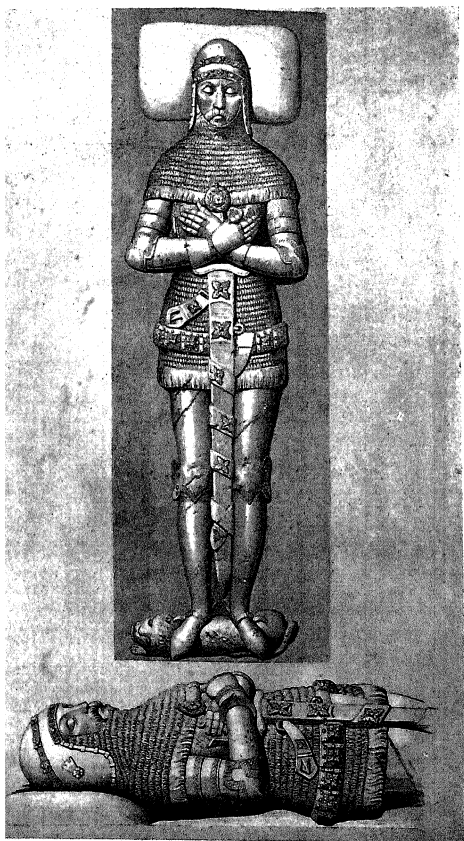
The members for Toledo, who were, in a way, the leaders of the house, usually opened proceedings by making their profound obeisances to the king, and, in a set speech, craving of him their ancient privileges.

These were granted as a matter of form by the Sovereign, who included the customs and privileges of Burgos in his bequest. After certificates of the fact had been given, Toledo resumed its seat.

Then followed a speech by the Crown nicely packed with the careful platitudes so necessary and customary on these occasions.

Burgos and Toledo, who evidently did not enjoy their precedence for nothing, after the conclusion of the royal speech, had then to rise and present themselves before the king, who said, "Let Burgos speak; I know Toledo will follow my orders."

Whether the faithfulness of Toledo was a superstition with the royal house of Castile, or what was the meaning of this phrase, does not appear.



DON BERNUDO DE ANGLESOLA
(First half of fourteenth century)

Certificates of the royal answer were, however, handed to these representatives, who then returned to their seats.

The ceremony of swearing-in the members of the Cortes took place in the following fashion :—

On the occasion of the second meeting of the Cortes, a space was left between the seats of Burgos and Leon for a table covered with a crimson damask, whereon were placed a crucifix and a New Testament.

Then after “ a florid and complimentary speech ” from the president, the names of the commons were read out aloud, and two by two, city by city, they came up to the table and placed their hands on the crucifix and Testament to bear witness to this oath :—

“ Your Lordship swears to God on this book and on this cross on which you lay your hands, that you will keep secret all that you hear or say in this assembly relating to the service of God and the King, and that you will not divulge the same to the cities or towns having votes in the Cortes till the business of the session is finished, unless by express orders of the King or the president, and you also swear to defend the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin, the patroness and guardian of these kingdoms.”

Days were then fixed for the despatch of business. Members were balloted for to attend the various committees and to be treasurers for the receipt of public monies.

Other points of etiquette were that no member could leave the Cortes during a session without the special permission of the president to whom he had to give a

satisfactory reason for his withdrawal. When any business was in hand, it had to be carried through, either in the affirmative or negative, unless it was advisable or advantageous to the king's service that it should be postponed. The collection of votes was done by the secretaries, after which a resolution embodying the purport of the vote was signed by four members chosen by ballot, when it was presented to the king, who, "having accepted the grant, thanked his faithful commons." It was then engrossed, and on a future day the president repeated the royal thanks; to which Burgos, who, as we have seen, shared with Toledo the John Doe and Richard Roe rôles of the assembly, suitably replied.

The president then rang a small bell that was on the table. At this signal, there entered the door-keepers, who listened with due gravity and respect to the secretary's reading of the grant, and then carried it for signature to Burgos and Leon, who signed it. After them, all the members of the commons did likewise. The grant was then returned to the president, who closed the proceedings with a short speech in the king's name.

If the grant was of a considerable nature, the members signified their happiness at receiving it by kissing the sovereign's hand.

When the grant was a matter of grace, votes were privately collected, and if there were only three dissentients, it could not pass. But in a matter of right, the voting was open and a majority carried the day.

When all these formalities had been carried out, the resolutions in hand became law—then and there, it would seem—without any such period of promulgation as is usual with us nowadays.

The officers of the Cortes, who were nominated by themselves, were fairly numerous and included two treasurers, an attorney-general, an accountant-general, a historiographer, four advocates, two physicians, and two surgeons.

On public festivals and state occasions the Cortes had a balcony near the king, and in time of dissolution they were represented by a deputation consisting of eight members appointed by themselves, of whom four were supernumeraries, who were only required to attend in case of the illness of the others.

In dealing with the constitution of Castile, one must notice the institution of the *Behetria*, which aroused the displeasure of Alburquerque, and was for a while in danger of being destroyed by him.

Ayala says that if the lord of a *Behetria* did not defend it, or behaved unjustly, the inhabitants could depose him and take another. “Therefore they were called *Behetrias* which signifies *quien bien les ficiere que los tenga*. Let him hold them who does them good.”¹

The institution probably has a further origin in the *beneficii* of the Romans. These consisted in certain land set apart for those whose services protected the frontiers from the inroads of barbarians.

These *Behetrias* were a kind of free town or confederation, and “implied a sort of popular govern-

¹ Ayala, 1351, Cap. XIV.

ment which maintained equality between inhabitants." Their origin dates back to the very earliest days of Spanish history, to the times indeed of the invasions of the Saracens.

Their power was defined by Alfonso X. in his laws of the Partidas, and Don Pedro I. in part codified their position in his *Libro del Bezerro*.

Electing their own governors, and ruling themselves, they became, often enough, a source of annoyance and trouble to the supreme authority, and it was their independence and power that inspired the ambitious Alburquerque with the vain hope of abolishing them entirely.

CHAPTER VII

THE BELOVED OF A KING

“—for you must know that this Doña Maria de Padilla was very beautiful and of good intelligence and small in stature.”—AYALA.

AND now the young King, who was eighteen years of age, was to fall in love. Maria was the lady's name, Doña Maria de Padilla, a name of interest to readers of English History, inasmuch as its possessor became the grandmother of one of our own monarchs.

Isabella, who married Edmund of Langley, the son of Edward III., was a daughter of Maria de Padilla by Peter the Cruel, so that in the English royal family there came to flow the blood of the Sovereigns of Castile.

Maria was a little lady, sprightly, beautiful, young, engaging, affectionate, and, as we shall see, of kind and tender heart. As one old chronicler of those times puts it, with a rapture rare in the writings of these staid and careful gentry, “she was the handsomest damsel in the world.”

But when one is eighteen, is it not always the handsomest damsel in the world with whom one falls in love? It is only when one gets a little older that one becomes either less fortunate or more careless

in these matters, and has, perforce, to qualify one's passion with less extravagant adjectives.

This handsome damsel, who has inspired innumerable poems, plays, and operas, was an orphan, and occupied the position of companion to the wife of Alburquerque, Isabel by name.

She was of good family, but had fallen upon evil times, for her house had been attached to the unfortunate Lara faction, with whom sudden death and the vengeance of Alburquerque had worked so disastrously.

Under what circumstances the Portuguese minister had offered a refuge to the young girl, I do not know, but, as a courtier, when he saw an opportunity of getting a recompense for the shelter he had offered her, he was quick to take it.

No doubt, it was by Alburquerque's influence that the King came to Gijon, near to the place where Maria was living in the minister's house, for the designing courtier hoped, with rather weak judgment, to attach himself more closely to his impetuous monarch, and to have him more surely under his control by bringing about his attachment to a lady who had enjoyed his and his wife's hospitality.

The Portuguese minister perceived in Don Pedro a rising tide of passion and independence, which, if not otherwise diverted, would surely turn itself to the limitation, if not the complete overthrow of his own authority. We do not know whether Pedro had yet cast eyes on any of the ladies of the court ; probably some signs of a quick and eager fancy in this direction



DOÑA MARIA DE PADILLA

had already been remarked by Albuquerque, and had led him to take matters into his own hands. The whole affair of Maria seems to have been a matter of arrangement between the girl's family and the minister and his wife. Her uncle, Juan de Henestrosa, especially delighted in the idea ; " did not hesitate," says Dillon, " to consign her to the arms of the Spanish gallant." Though, all things considered, Don Pedro could not have been very much of a gallant in those days. At any rate, a very callow, inexperienced gallant, though, no doubt, of great promise in this particular direction.

It was at Saint Fagund, a town near Gijon, that Pedro first met Maria. She was then a year or so older than the King, and the sparkle of her dark eyes, the gleam of her warm and olive skin, and the flashings of her merry wit, threw the passionate young Castilian into all the fever of furious love at first sight. How anxiously the conspirators must have watched the first effects of the introduction, contrived perhaps to look as though it had happened by the merest accident. Isabel no doubt assisted her scheming husband in the affair. We know that she was fond of Maria, and was amused by her wit ; and the bringing together of the young people must have been something more to her than a part of her duty as the wife of a politician. If she resented the idea, there is at any rate no evidence of it, but it is improbable that she had a more tender conscience in such a matter than the rest of her contemporaries. One can well imagine that deep and beautiful obeisance of Maria which would look so

spontaneous, but which would be really the result of diligent coaching and practice, in response to which Don Pedro would peep at her out of his sharp, keen eyes, and say, doubtless, in aristocratic and fourteenth century Spanish: "How does your ladyship do! I am charmed to meet you."

And then in due time Isabel and Alburquerque would leave the young couple together to build their own substantial ambitions upon the vague and pretty dreams of youth. The chronicle is silent as to details of this first interview between Maria and Pedro, but the plan of the minister was successful, for the King and the young girl fell in love at once, a love on the lady's part that was something more than the merely compensatory affection which wealth and rank and power can evoke, while, as for Don Pedro, his heart was always mortgaged to Maria even when he was gambling with it elsewhere in the wildest excesses of his later years.

He had, after all, a certain talent for faithfulness, this ferocious Castilian polygamist. It is impossible to avoid remarking in him a certain unobtrusive *métier de mari* which, however, unfortunately for his wife, he only cultivated when at all, for the benefit of his mistress.

Pedro was now a personable young prince. He was high-spirited, generous, masterful, and passionate. He wooed Maria with ardour and the impatience of youth. But though the lady loved, she had scruples. Whether these were inspired by religion, or interest and a natural desire for self-protection not yet

swallowed up in her love of the King, does not appear. Doubtless memories of what Doña Isabel, her patron, had counselled only a little while before seemed to her to conflict strangely with the advice of to-day. Maria was more a woman of heart than of head, though she was clever enough, and perhaps in this case the counsels of love and interest were really one.

The position offered her was a usual and an important one, and, after a certain amount of maidenly hesitation, she accepted it, much to the delight of her relations.

There was probably a promise of marriage. According to reports, there actually was a secret marriage, but of this there is no evidence. Had there been such a marriage we may think that, as things turned out later, Maria would never have been able to keep quiet about it.

At any rate, we learn that the scruples of Maria were eventually overcome, whether by the tenderness of her wooing, the representations and persuasion of her family, or the promise of marriage, is not known.

Mariana permits himself a fierce tirade at the morality which could so cold-bloodedly arrange *liaisons* for princes, and indeed, if one is going to preach about the matter at all, it is against Alburquerque and the Padilla family that one must direct such reproaches. But the whole history of these times is so filled with craft and cruel callousness that one is inclined to refrain from retrospective blame and abuse, lest one turn the whole chronicle into a bad sermon.

Don Pedro, at any rate, was very much in love and very happy. We may presume that he expressed many thanks to his old tutor for preparing for him

so exquisite and delightful a lesson as Maria. The tutor, however, was watching the result of his scheming with doubting eyes. From a young girl, full of pious exercises, and as discreet and obedient as a light-hearted nun, there was rapidly evolving something very different.

The Maria of the last few months, the gentle, beautiful stranger at the hospitable board, was becoming a young woman of character. Love was ripening her, quickening new and violent impulses in her heart; flattery, success, and the admiration of a king and court were stirring moods and ideas of ambition.

As an almost immediate result of being so wise and statesmanlike as to have a Maria in their family, the Padillas were raised to various offices and dignities, Henestrosa became an important courtier, with the appointment of *Alcade de los fidalgos*. Diego Garcia de Padilla found himself a *privado* of the King; and Don Juan Tenorio,¹ little dreaming of the lovely music and fantastic wit to be, one day, woven over his famous patronymic, came at this time into the friendship and counsels of Don Pedro. The latter was made *Repostero Mayor*, and began to dislodge Albuquerque from his former position by the royal ear. It is no wonder that Pedro, becoming the object of all these new and violent influences, found himself

¹ This person cannot be identified with his famous namesake of Molière and Mozart although there is some evidence to show that he led a similar kind of life. There are at least two original Don Juans, one of whom (Don Juan de Mañara) is known to have actually existed. See A. de Latour, "Don Juan."

drifting away from the voice that had taught him how to decline *mensa* and given him his earliest lessons in the art of mediæval kingship.

"Throw off your tutelage!" Maria would say to him. "You are a man now. Be the King yourself, instead of the Portuguese." To such advice were added the subtle, more delicate arguments of praise and flattery by all the new courtiers, anxious to earn and deserve their new good fortunes by the current coin of their kind.

Don Juan Tenorio, too, must have been an influence to turn the young Sovereign's ideas into different and more independent channels.

Talk o' nights, perhaps, brave frothy talk of inexperience, talk of women and wine, and the sweet chances of youth.

Don Pedro had not been eighteen and a king of Castile, if some of all this new life had not gone to his head. And yet, so strong was the old influence on him, so well had Albuquerque etched his personality into the young monarch's mind, that open revolt was as yet an impossibility to him.

"He conspired against his minister in secret," a poor, weak, unkingly thing to do. He sought a generous and full reconciliation with his brothers, Don Enrique and Don Tello. All these young men gathered together, and plotted against the wisdom and authority of the old minister.

"It was," says Mérimée, with a pretty touch, "a conspiracy of scholars against their tutor."¹

¹ "Mérimée," p. 136, vol. i. Eng. ed.

The inclusion in these rash and youthful councils of Don Pedro's brothers seems to have been the result of his own initiative. No doubt the two young princes, who were designed by the nature of their birth and their circumstances for a life of plotting and revolt, were only too glad to be for once engaged in a revolution with the King on their side.

It is noticeable that no mention of the name of Don Fadrique is included in the accounts of these meetings of the King and his young friends. Against this brother Pedro seems always to have had a strong antipathy.

It is suggested by some writers that Fadrique was then with the ambassadors in France seeking on behalf of Castile (as represented by the Queen-mother and Alburquerque) the hand of the lady whom Pedro was eventually to marry, but Ayala makes no mention of the fact.

Several other theories have also been advanced for the dislike of the King towards Fadrique, which will be considered later.

So successful were the young conspirators in their designs against the authority of Alburquerque, that they managed to persuade him to undertake a political wild goose chase to Portugal. Thither the minister went to see the King of his native land on a mission whose frivolity and uselessness he was only later to discover. We may imagine how the young King and his boy courtiers laughed at the success of this trick of theirs.

The departure of the old head from the councils

of the young had one result in a display of fêtes and tournaments.

The young people, in fact, set out to enjoy themselves, undisturbed and unreprieved.

The King took up his residence at Torrijos near Toledo, and proceeded to abandon himself to a life of pleasure.

Aided by the wit and experience of Don Juan Tenorio, who occupied the post of a sort of Arbiter Elegantiarum to his master, Don Pedro devoted himself entirely to pleasure and excitement.

Revelling in the love and freshness of Maria, courted, flattered, and admired on all sides, he tasted fully the intoxicating delights of youth and absolute power.

CHAPTER VIII

A LADY FOR MY LORD

MEANWHILE an alliance of a more regular and serious nature had been arranged for Don Pedro by Albuquerque and the Queen-mother.

Even before this, many years ago, Pedro had been affianced by solemn treaty to a daughter of King Edward III. of England, but had by death lost his youthful betrothed.

In this second case, however, it was to France that Castile turned.

Ambassadors had gone to Paris to ask in marriage, on behalf of their sovereign, Blanche, the niece of John of France, and daughter of the Duke of Bourbon.

Blanche was a little girl, not quite fifteen, of sweet and good disposition, and simple, modest beauty.

Unfortunate child ! She was one of those princesses who must prove the frequent bitterness of high estate.

Instead of a young lover with smiles on his lips came two or three grave, bearded, old gentlemen full of ceremony, officiousness, and long speeches. We learn that when the princesses of the House of Bourbon were brought before the ambassadors, they chose Blanche as being the most beautiful and charming of them all.

She must have peeped at them with especial curiosity as they stood in their quaint old, black coats and gold chains and high velvet collars, scrutinising the modest little row of sisters. For if these gentlemen were Castilians, it would give her an idea of what her own husband might grow into.

Then later the legal document, that treaty full of "honourables" and "most high potents," which gave to Castile a princess of France.

Then followed preparations: the weaving and webbing of lovely gowns—as should become a daughter of France and a niece of France's King—and packing of jewellery, and trinkets, and treasures, and the wedding dress, and the little things that were popped into the boxes at the last moment by the princess herself when nobody was looking.

She was going to Spain to be married; it might be a long time before she saw her old home at Moulins again.

And then followed a long journey through France and Spain, accompanied by a retinue of lords and squires, until she came to the city of Valladolid.

No sign came to her from her betrothed, no little note or word, no offering to brighten her stranger's way. Everybody seemed extremely glad to see her, and extremely polite, except him, for whose sake she had made that toilsome journey over all those hills and valleys.

Nor did time make of Pedro a kinder suitor, for when, at last, Castile was reached it was to no

hospitable house that Blanche went. The little French princess had need of all her courage and piety, for it seemed she had come to a lover who was too busy to think of her. So she turned for sympathy to her friend Claire, and said her prayers and waited. Days passed and still no word came from the King. Her time was passed anxiously. Was Castile perhaps so great a country that messages took so long to deliver?

The knights and squires of France, who had accompanied their Princess, expressed, we know, their disgust at this casual treatment of her. The Spanish ambassadors felt themselves at a disadvantage when they tried to soothe these ruffings of their French friends' honour. A strange state of tension existed in the ancient city of Valladolid: for the French retinue, insulting and annoying; for the ambassadors, Queen Maria, and the good folk of the town, painful and false; for Blanche—looking with anxious eyes from the palace windows for the lover who never came—a bitterness beyond the strength of her years.

Don Pedro, in whom the kisses of Maria de Padilla worked forgetfulness, must, nevertheless, have sometimes risen from her arms to remember that his betrothed awaited his coming in Valladolid. A wound which he sustained at a tourney was an additional excuse to prevent him hurrying to the city.

Even a little reading between the lines of the old chronicles will allow us to perceive how the situation struck them at Torrijos. The young courtiers con-

sidered it no doubt as an excellent jest against Alburquerque. Meanwhile Blanche could only wonder and wait, and turn over her wedding-dress and ask herself if it was ever to be used after all.

But into this false and painful situation came hot from that foolish errand to Portugal the old minister of the King.

Alburquerque, to whom rumours of the strangest doings had been carried, and in a temper which may well be imagined, suddenly descended on the gay and frivolous crowd that surrounded King Peter at Torrijos.

Again that swish of the ex-tutor's black robes, and the sight of his black hat surmounting a frown of more than pedagogic proportions must have thrilled and alarmed Don Pedro as the memory of old authority grown impotent can never fail to do.

The young people, with smiles that faded from their lips, and jests that shrivelled at his approach, were to be reminded that one must live seriously at times. Imagine this pretty court, rich in all that money could buy and youth could spend—Pedro, Maria, Tenorio de Cerda, all of them brought by a minister's frown to a remembrance of the demands of their country and their people.

In a grave and solemn speech, in which no doubt the minister put some of the feeling that he had gained for Don Pedro as the moulder of his early days, and had not as yet lost as reprover of his imperious passions, he explained the gravity of the situation.

“Think,” he told the King, “of the affront which you offer to the noble and powerful house of France. Can you, Sire, who have so lately come to your throne, afford to make such powerful enemies? Remember, Sire, when you lay ill soon after your accession, how full of trouble and dissension Castile showed itself. You cannot tell friend from foe when all goes well!”

Albuquerque further pointed out how the King’s subjects had hoped, in seeing him allied to the royal family of France, to find a guarantee for the peace and tranquillity so desirable in a Christian land.

He urged the solemnity of the treaty; the pathos of the position of Blanche—who had come among strangers at his bidding—the gallantry and courtesy which as a knight, let alone a monarch, chivalry demanded of him. The counsels of age and wisdom prevailed. The wine-cup was banished and the roses tossed away. Kisses, song, music, jousts, tourneys, happy days of the chase, and tender nights of love were brought to an end. The king dared not disobey his minister in this matter, as to the rights of which he could have had no doubts. Leaving Maria, after having taken precautions for her safety and comfort, he set out to join Blanche. But his affections were in the Castle of Montalvan with the Padilla, if his majesty and sense of duty were journeying for Valladolid.

There is no account of the meeting of the French Princess and the young Castilian. Ayala, who is



DOÑA BLANCA DE BOURBON

a severe historian, seldom gives any space in his chronicle to detailing sentimental episodes.¹

But we know that Blanche found small favour in her bridegroom's eyes. He hurried on the marriage merely with the idea of fulfilling a diplomatic obligation. The dowry of 300,000 gold florins which she brought him does not seem to have allowed him to look at her any more tenderly.

The failure of Blanche to arouse any love or even interest in Pedro has been the subject of much discussion, some scandal, and many theories.

Not only does she seem to have failed entirely to charm him in the least degree, but one may almost suspect a feeling of something like dislike for her in his general attitude and behaviour. It is really a little extraordinary.

He was, of course, in love with Maria, in love with her more or less during the whole of her life, but not so much in love that he could not look for and find other charming objects for his amorous fancy from time to time. He seems, as we shall see in his escapade with Doña Juana de Castro, to have been very much a creature of impetuous fancy and lightning-like vagary, in his dealings with women as well as with men; subject to sudden likes, and therefore naturally inclined to sudden aversions. Here, I fancy, we may find the true cause of Pedro's dislike, for his youthful

¹ It comes almost as a revelation to learn from his nephew Fernan Perez de Guzman in "*Generaciones y Semblanzas*," that Ayala loved women very much, more than befitted a gentleman of his wisdom.

bride. Even if, in the full fervour and romantic devotion of his first great passion, his youthful sense of what his love demanded of him had forbidden him to regard Blanche in any other light than a political argument in French petticoats, the cynicism which years brought him would have absolved his conscience in this regard, and have allowed him to make love to his own wife without any feeling of having outraged his sense of chivalric fidelity.

As for the other reasons which history and legend have furnished for his coldness towards his wife, though nearly all the historians who write of this reign, including Mariana, have condemned them as groundless scandal, they nevertheless include them in their works. In one's own turn, one can hardly do less.

The story, set forth in four lines of an old ballad, runs as follows :—

*“ Entre las gentes se dice
Mas no por cosa sabida
Que la reina Doña Blanca
Del Maestre esta parida.”*

that is, “ People say among themselves, but only as a rumour, that Queen Blanche had a child by the Master.”

“ The Master ” is, of course, Don Fadrique, the Master of Santiago, who, it is alleged, was one of the Ambassadors sent to demand the Princess's hand from John of France, and it is declared by the gossips that Blanche fell in love with the princely ambassador, and on the journey back to Castile became his mistress.

Commentators have adduced the long time occupied by Blanche and her suite in returning to Castile as some sort of additional evidence for the story. The Conde de la Roca says with evident enjoyment though really without the slightest justification for the main premise of his argument: "If the Infante Don Fadrique was a year, and more, as is asserted, conducting Queen Blanche to Valladolid, it proves either that the roads were very bad, or that they did not take the best."¹

Unfortunately for this story, there is no evidence of Don Fadrique ever having been in Paris with the Ambassadors on this mission. Ayala does not mention him as being so engaged, and the whole of the episode rests mainly on vague traditions. Señor Llaguno, the editor of Ayala, says that the mere fact that Don Fadrique was not at the wedding is sufficient proof that he was not with Blanche in France.

Contemporary opinion settled the mystery of the royal disagreement in true mediæval fashion with the assistance of magic and sorcery. Maria de Padilla, for whom a mysterious ancestry has since been quite incorrectly discovered, was supposed to have enchanted the youthful king to the extent, that on the day of his marriage instead of appearing to lead a charming young bride to the altar, he saw beside him an object of I know not what horror and repulsiveness.

Mariana relates the story of a magic girdle :—

Blanche made offering to her husband of a beautiful

¹ Sotomayor, too, has no illusions about Blanche's virtue, but unfortunately neither has he any evidence.

golden girdle, which became changed by the sorceries and arts of Maria and a few friends of hers into a monstrous snake. When this girdle-snake began to writhe upon the King's body and to hiss, the King and his courtiers were naturally surprised and horrified. At this point, Maria ventured the explanation that Blanche must have wrought this sorcery with the intention of procuring the King's ruin.¹

But, firm believer in magic that I am, I must protest that this story will not serve to account for the King's coldness to Blanche at the wedding and immediately afterwards, for the chronicle left Maria, in her castle at Montalvan, no doubt, as the legends would have it, concocting deadly philtres, and turning her jewellery into live-stock, but at any rate out of communication with the King and Court.

The noble couple were married on the 3rd of June with some display and ceremony.

A rather remarkable procession was formed to the church of Santa Maria la Nueva, where the ceremony took place. The Conde de Trastamara and Don Tello, who but a few days before had met the King outside Valladolid on his way to Blanche with retinues so large as to seem hostile, and who had then only just escaped a conflict, now walked in all amity and brotherliness to this alliance of France and Castile. The two bastard brothers led the palfrey of the bride; the Infante of Aragon the mule on which his mother, the

¹ *Histoire des Papes d'Avignon*, Baluze, quoted by Llaguno in his notes to Ayala, 1353, Cap. XII. Polydore Virgil also mentions the story.

Dowager, rode ; while his brother Don Juan did the like honour to Queen Maria of Castile.

It is interesting to know that Doña Leonor was dressed in white woollen robes, while Maria wore white samite and plumes.

The horses of the King and his bride were white. Robes of gold brocade, bordered with ermine, adorned the royal couple. There followed a great train of knights, courtiers, and nobles of various factions, "perhaps somewhat surprised," says Mérimée, "to find themselves together anywhere but on a battle-field." Alburquerque stood by the King during the ceremony, while Doña Leonor, Queen of Aragon, acted as mother to the young bride. Ayala, the chronicler, must almost certainly have been present at the wedding, as we know he was with Don Pedro but a few days previously, arranging, in his character of page, a little matter of chivalry with Pero Carillo.

The King went through the ceremony with an uneasy look in his eyes, and no bridegroom's smile upon his lips. What greater chance could the populace, to whom rumour and idle tales are always desirable, have wished for as an opportunity for gossip and talk. A king who frowned upon his queen, as he led her to the altar ; a lover with no love to offer.

Small wonder is it that stories of snakes and sorceries and treacherous brothers went quickly from mouth to mouth. How the women's tongues must have pattered ; each with some fresh bit of observation or news, some new and scandalous story to offer. Nor did time mend things.

But two days of restlessness and fret did Pedro pass in the same palace as Blanche, and two nights during which, legend tells us, he never even touched the latch of the bridal chamber.

The inference and the outcome were obvious, and on the Wednesday following his marriage, when the King was dining alone and companionless in the great dining-hall of his palace, word was brought to him of a small feminine deputation that was waiting to see him just outside the door.

Nerving himself for a scene that was bound to be unpleasant to one of his stern and essentially masculine nature, Don Pedro prepared to receive the deputation. It consisted of his mother, Queen Maria, and his aunt, Doña Leonor.

“Then,” to quote Ayala’s¹ words, “the King rose from the table and spoke with them aside, and as both he and they afterwards reported, they said to him :—

“‘My lord, it is made known to us that you are minded to go from hence and rejoin Doña Maria de Padilla, and we beg you in mercy to desist. For, if you do this thing, you make but little of your honour in thus forsaking your wife immediately after your marriage, when all the highest and best of your kingdom are assembled here. And further, the King of France will have good cause of complaint against you, who has newly allied himself to you by this marriage, and has sent you this niece of his, whose hand you asked of him ; and he sent her hither with great pomp and retinue, as was but just. Further,

¹ Ayala, year 1353, Cap. XII.

my lord, it will cause grave scandal in your kingdom, should you thus go hence, for all the highest in your kingdom have come hither at your command, and it will not be for your good service thus to depart without word and speech with them.' "

Although "as both he and they afterwards reported, they said to him," I think one may justifiably suspect that their actual language was less formal and moderate. These remarks, no doubt, contained the gist of their talk, but they read to me rather like what the good ladies thought they said, tempered by the style of Ayala.

At any rate, they made not the slightest effect upon the King, who, perceiving the futility of arguments in such a case, expressed in diplomatic vein his surprise that any such idea should have occurred to them. He thus avoided a scene, and had his own way.

A little later in the day he called for his mules, saying that he intended to pay a visit to Doña Maria, his mother. But, to nobody's surprise, he rode away out of Valladolid and covered part of the distance that separated him from Maria de Padilla and the Castle of Montalvan, passing the night at a place called Pajares.

Messages had passed between the King and his mistress, and the lady came part of the way to meet her knight, encountering him at the village of Montalvan. We may imagine the meeting: Pedro happy at finding himself so near to the beloved bosom where he might forget the remonstrances and outcries of his mother and the bishops; the Padilla eager to

read in his eyes if there were anything in Blanche to be feared as a rival.

The news of the King's desertion of his bride was received in different part by different members of the Court and State. With the populace, whose heart is ever on the side of respectability and the right, it was a move likely to make the young monarch decidedly unpopular. With Albuquerque and the people, who had engineered the match, such conduct was voted outrageous and deplorable. The minister, along with Don Juan Nuñez de Prado and some other nobles, set out to overtake the King in order to impress him with the need for more responsible behaviour.

Many of his courtiers had agreed with him on this question to the extent, at any rate, of accompanying him more or less closely in his flight for Montalvan.

Among the ecclesiastics who dared actively to oppose the royal methods was the Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo, a man of courage and honesty. This man, almost alone amongst the clergy, seems to have ventured a reprimand in the name of the church to the King. His advice and reproofs found, however, no favour with Don Pedro, and before long the Cardinal betook himself to Avignon to lend his counsels to the Papacy.

The Conde de Tastamara, Don Tello, and the Infante of Aragon followed Pedro at a little distance as though endeavouring to flavour acceptance of his views with mild reproof of them at the same time.

The stay at Montalvan was a short one. Counsels of prudence prevailed. The nobles and courtiers with

Don Pedro advised his return to his wife for at any rate a certain time.

So the court went back to Valladolid, and for two days there was peace and contentment in the women's quarter of the Alcazar.

So secure, however, did Maria feel of the royal affections, that with a consideration for the sorrows of others, which she frequently showed during her life, she advised her lover's return to Valladolid.

But for two days only. Irritated by the presence of Blanche, or anxious to return to his mistress, Pedro within forty-eight hours was in the saddle again, this time *en route* for Oviende, where Maria was awaiting him. He never, says Ayala, saw his wife again.

Blanche, in her misfortunes, had to a large extent the people on her side and in particular those of the city of Toledo, where, by order of the King, she was later brought to be imprisoned, although it was not called by that name.

When Blanche came to the city she insisted on being allowed to visit the church of Santa Maria, for she feared, she said, death at the hands of the King's servants and the minions of the Padilla faction.

And, once there, no promises or appeals by Juan de Henestrosa, who had been charged with her fortunes, were of avail to move her. Surrounded by bishops, priests, and some nobles of the city who felt sympathy for her sad case, she claimed sanctuary and peace. And Henestrosa, tired of the trouble and fuss, and ill-pleased with his mission, betook himself to Don Pedro,

full no doubt of the terrible experiences he had suffered in Toledo.

After his departure, a little boudoir conspiracy arose. The noble ladies of the city, who came partly from curiosity and partly from kindness to visit the young queen, found her so gentle, so lovable, and withal so unfortunate, that they all put their heads together, and as a consequence determined to have the support of their lords in the matter.

“They would be,” the ladies said, each in her manner to her respective lord, “the meanest men on earth if such a queen as this, their lady and the wife of their lord the king, should die such a death in the city where they were, and since they had the power, let them prevent it.”¹

So many were their supplications and so great a wave of sympathy swept over Toledo for the unhappy Blanche, that nearly all the knights and nobles of the place prepared themselves to defend her safety to the last.

And when it was rumoured that Pedro was outside the city’s gates with members of the Padilla family and many knights and soldiers, the city rose and put the image of its honour, Blanche, into the Alcazar, and prepared to defend her as best it might.

“And the time was Thursday, at the hour of terce of the eve of the feast of St Mary in the month of August.”¹

¹ Ayala.

CHAPTER IX

ALBURQUERQUE'S DOWNFALL

WHEN, with his retinue of 1500 cavaliers and the support of numerous other knights and dependents, Alburquerque took the road in pursuit of his King, it was to be almost the last occasion on which he should ever do so. As a man of influence and authority in the state, Alburquerque, though he was schemer, plotter, traitor, self-seeker, and even murderer, was a statesman of strength and power. In his evil qualities, he was much the same as everybody else in his circle, with perhaps a deeper craft and cynicism of his own, but he had at any rate governed with some show of strength and purpose while the portfolio was in his hands.

A little way on the road to Montalvan, there came to him Don Simuel el Levi, a Jew whose Hispanicized patronymic looks more intensely Hebraic than ever in this guise.

This Jew was now Grand Treasurer of Castile, an office which his friendship with the Padillas had brought him. It is, perhaps, from such associations as these that rumour and legend have always sought to refer Maria de Padilla to the Jewish race. In reality, however, she was a Christian, of ancient lineage, but her own and her family's, and Don Pedro's

intimacy with so many Jews is a curious fact. Smilingly this bearer of royal messages greeted the fallen minister.

“The King,” he said to Albuquerque, “has still great respect for your experience, and now as ever counts upon your good offices. You may safely appear before him ; but he is surprised that you are attended by so numerous a retinue, and he begs you to dismiss your attendants.”

After having delivered himself of his official message, it is understood that he conversed with Albuquerque in a more familiar manner, telling him the views of the Padillas and urging his own, all of which bore a friendly relation towards the minister. Levi advised an interview with the King, and promised reconciliation and good fortune.

But some of the staff of the Jewish Treasurer, recognising among Albuquerque’s host certain of their friends, conversed with them in a yet freer and more natural manner than that employed by their captains. There passed from lip to lip rumours of another kind, whispers of intentions less pacific than those which were mirrored in the face and words of the courtly, smiling Jew. Talk of war, and of preparations at Toledo, of blocked gates, summonings of garrisons, and changes of officers.

In this babble of the lesser ones, Albuquerque fancied he saw more of truth than in the speeches of the Grand Treasurer, and, excusing himself from an immediate return to the King with Don Levi, he called his friends around him.

And while they talked thus, there came from the court a second messenger from Don Pedro, who urged the immediate return of Albuquerque to his sovereign.

So warm an invitation seemed to the cautious Portuguese only answerable by a refusal, and among the doubts and disturbances of his camp he wrote the following message for the King, which he entrusted to his Major-Domo, Ruy Diaz Cabeza de Vaca :—

“Don Juan Alonso kisses your hands, and commends himself to your favour. He would be this moment in your presence, if he had not learned that evil-minded counsellors have calumniated him to you. You know, Sire, all that Don Juan Alonso has done in your service, and in that of the queen, your mother. He has been your Chancellor ever since your birth. He has always served you loyally, as he served the late King, your father. For you he ran great personal risk at the time when Leonor de Guzman and her faction had supreme power in the kingdom. As yet, he is ignorant of the crimes laid to his charge. When they are known to him, he will immediately clear his character. Meanwhile, if any cavalier question his honour and his loyalty, his vassal Ruy Diaz Cabeza de Vaca will answer him, sword in hand.”

Pedro heard this daring speech in silence, and quickly dismissed the messenger, after telling him that his master's best plan was to trust to the King's clemency.

Albuquerque showed by his action that he did not set any particular value on this quality of Pedro, for he

set out almost immediately for the Portuguese frontier, where he secured himself in one of his castles.

Meanwhile, at Court, the downfall of all who had held office under favour of the exiled minister became complete.

A further shuffle of positions took place, and the Padilla family found itself further enriched and empowered. No revolution followed the change in the government, for the people felt no immediate effect from the altered state of things. It concerned them little what the names of the favourites who surrounded the King were, for their own lives went on just the same. And so long as the Padillas did not show themselves too grasping and greedy in the use of their new power, the nobles of the kingdom regarded their elevation with no particular hostility. Alburquerque's name had ceased to inspire the confidence necessary for revolt and the disruption of established authority, and beyond his own immediate vassals and kinsmen his fall excited small sympathy. Certain of these latter gentry expressed their displeasure at the new turn of things by pillaging and seizing the lands of anyone who was not strong enough to defend them, nor did these sporadic ravages and assaults tend to increase the popularity of the disgraced favourite.

To such a point did this kind of thing advance, that complaints were carried to the King's ears. The resulting threats of royal retribution made Alburquerque fearful for his own large possessions.

He treated for the King's favour once more in all

humility and deference, even accepting to that end the offices of his rival Don Juan Tenorio, who was, in some measure, enjoying his old position at the Court.

Alburquerque's sons came to Pedro as hostages, and, in return, the King promised the security of his late counsellor's lands and estates.

Misfortune now naturally fell on those who had allied themselves with the lost cause, and the people who had been staunchest in their fidelity had nothing left for them but exile or the chance of the clemency and forgiveness of Don Pedro. Two knights in particular, Gonzales de Moran, and Perez de Castro, the latter the brother of the famous Inez de Castro, made a pilgrimage to the throne to ask pardon for their misfortunes. Only by the interposition of Maria, who sent the knights a warning, did they, by flight, escape a bloody and cruel death.

Everything that the envy and hatred of the Padillas and the anger of the king against his late minister could suggest, in the way of insult and annoyance, was done. His confidant and brother-at-arms, Don Juan Nuñez de Prado, was brought to his death through the machinations of Diego de Padilla and indirectly through the wish of the king. Yet Pedro can hardly be charged with the guilt of this murder. He was ignorant of its commission at the time. Although he must surely have known to what end the authority and hatred of Diego de Padilla would lead.

In his exile in Portugal, Alburquerque heard all this news with a bitter heart, in which were fermenting

passions of revenge and desires for retaliation. But he kept quiet ; secure in having gained the confidence and aid of the King of Portugal. Yet, although Albuquerque himself made no sign, several of his more rash and impetuous vassals in Castile expressed their displeasure with the existing condition of things in the manner usual to the times, by laying waste the lands and castles of the people with whom they disagreed.

This irritated Pedro so much, that, forgetful of his promises, he began to lay siege to some of the towns which called Albuquerque lord. After capturing the town of Medellin, his army besieged the larger city of Albuquerque, which gave its master his name. The reduction of this place promised to be a matter of some time, so Don Pedro left his brothers, Don Fadrique and Don Enrique, before its walls and returned to Castile. He sent ambassadors to Portugal demanding Albuquerque from Alfonso IV. This monarch was in no hurry to deliver up the ex-minister to the vengeance of the King of Castile and his friends, and temporised until he should have time to see how matters were likely to turn out. Albuquerque defended his conduct to the Portuguese monarch in a long speech, wherein he recited his virtues at length and omitted his failings. Not that good or evil qualities, or right or wrong, or merit or demerit were likely to enter much into any consideration ; but, no doubt, Albuquerque hoped to impress Pedro's ambassadors who stood around, and to strengthen by an exhibition of character the good impression he

had already created for himself in his royal host's mind.

Don Pedro, who at this time was engaged in frivolities and amours at home in the company of his young courtiers, seems just now to have abated something in his wrath and warlikeness, and for the moment to have preferred the delights of love to the business of war. About this time it was that he wavered in his one great passion to pay court to other women, one of whom was the unfortunate Juana de Castro, the story of whose one night's empire over his fierce and fickle heart will later appear.

These were days of dalliance that nearly cost Pedro dear.

Enrique and Fadrique who, by comparison with their brother, were insignificant characters in the way of libertinage, and newly-married men, perceived in the general condition of things an immediate opportunity of self-advancement.

An alliance between Albuquerque and the two young princes struck the treacherous Conde as being a political move of no little importance. We know it was from his young brain that this piece of treason sprang, for Ayala who "served his cause with his own sword" as Merimée has it, and wrote his chronicles under his ægis, distinctly states so.

Albuquerque, in whom we do not find a treachery so sudden and lightning-like as this, felt at any rate no compunction in availing himself of its consequences.

Enrique's plan was, curiously enough, not to offer himself as a Pretender to the throne in the place

of Don Pedro when he should have been removed, but to put the Infante of Portugal into this position. It was an arrangement which had in it certain possibilities for the nobles and commons of Castile. The Infante was heir to another great kingdom, and would bring a territory of vast value as his portion. Being the grandson of Don Sancho on his mother's side, he was nearer the royal family of Castile by one degree than Don Pedro himself, whose right came through his being the son of Alfonso, and great-grandson of the original Don Sancho.

Although Alburquerque, whose position had now made him ready to espouse any cause which seemed tolerably sure of success, and at the same time capable of furthering his own interests, adopted the scheme with energy and enthusiasm, it was otherwise with the father of the young prince who aspired to the sceptre of Castile.

Don Alfonso IV. of Portugal, foreseeing either the failure of the plan, or distrusting his own son's capacity, or not anxious to see his kingdom involved in a war with Castile, did not hesitate a moment in expressing his absolute disapproval of the revolt. He recalled his son, and did all in his power to express his strong condemnation of the action of the young conspirators.

Queen Maria of Castile, Pedro's mother, who was at this time at the Portuguese court, had there a love adventure, which, as it afterwards proved, was to cost her and her knight dear. She must have been a lady of middle age, when she began this kind of Indian summer in her sentimental life. In the

delight of her newly-found youth, she forgot all about politics, and sought only to efface the memory of the last bitter years of her life in Castile. All her interest in the wrangling and warring factions of Albuquerque and his foes suddenly ceased. Blanche and her young sorrows were forgotten. Maria de Padilla, Pedro, Enrique, all now amounted to little in her eyes, because of a certain Portuguese knight called Martin Alfonso Telho.

Lest anything should disturb the course of this new passion of hers, Maria made haste to leave Portugal in order that her presence there might not, in the conditions existing between that land and Castile, be held indicative of treason or collusion on her part. And further, lest she might meet any of the troops of the rebellious allies, she and her knight returned to Castile by a round-about and extended route. Of this journey, which we may be sure was not unduly hurried, Ayala says that Telho "held her horse's bridle the whole way."

But, leaving Maria with her knight in their pleasant and leisurely journey from Portugal; leaving Telho holding the bridle, and helping Maria to mount and dismount, we turn to Castile to find a new revolt in the making.

Allied against Don Pedro were not only his brothers, Enrique, Fadrique, and Tello, but many nobles and *Ricos Hombres*, who had reasons for complaining of his treatment of them or their families.

One of Pedro's first moves, a move strictly political though full of future military possibilities, was to

marry Doña Isabel de Lara, second daughter of Don Juan Nuñez, to the Infante Don Juan de Aragon. He thus disinherited the elder sister of this lady and bestowed upon the Infante in his wife's right the title of Lord of Biscay and Lara. This move was particularly aimed against Don Tello, who was then in the province of Biscay, inciting the countryside to revolt.

The various armies dispersed then about the country, were not in any hurry to co-operate and join other friendly forces nor to engage in a pitched battle with their foes. They all preferred to lay waste defenceless lands, to crush weak castles, to pillage, harass, and sack. Pedro turned his attention towards the territories of Alburquerque. This latter, along with the Conde de Trastamara, had crossed the Tagus, and was devastating the neighbouring country.

At Barrios de Salas, the little army of Henry and Alburquerque met that which was gathered under the standard of Fernando de Castro, brother to the unfortunate Juana whose treatment by Pedro had helped to throw him in arms against his King. These knights and their men-at-arms met with the forces of the Infante of Aragon, whose sword Pedro now imagined to be on his side by virtue of the gift of Biscay. But, as the Infante showed no particular hostility towards the open enemies of his lord the King, it is fair to conjecture that there had been a little further underhand diplomacy at work.

About this time the city of Toledo was disturbed by that little boudoir conspiracy mentioned in the

last chapter, and the general disaffection towards the King seemed to be spreading all over the land, till gradually the rebels had so strong a hand that the Infantes of Aragon decided to throw in their lot with them.

It was by suffering acts of treachery like this that Pedro's character was moulded into that fierce and cruel shape which, from about this time, it began to take. He trusted his brothers, and at the first opportunity they rebelled against him. He trusted his cousins, the Aragonese princes, and they, too, defaulted from his side in the hour of his necessity. He soon saw that trust and confidence were virtues of almost no account in fourteenth century kingship. Even his aunt, Doña Leonor, went over to Enrique at Cuenca de Tameriz, when that city fell into his possession.

The various armies and forces opposed to the authority of Don Pedro were now so numerous and so powerful that they ceased their policy of individual skirmishing and pillage, and made some show of uniting under a common cause.

This took the form of a national protest of indignation against the King's treatment of his wife, Blanche, and an objection to the government of the Padilla family.

One of the first cares of the young sovereign thus so sorely pressed by his rebel nobles and lieges was for the safety of his mistress, Maria. He placed her in the castle of Tordesillas, one of the few places which still acknowledged his authority. Then he

sat down and composed a long letter to the Infante of Aragon, at the time acting as Regent of that land, in the place of Pedro IV., who was in Sardinia.

This epistle was written to seek aid from his brother prince in this his hour of distress. It runs :—

“ Don Pedro, by the Grace of God, King of Castile, etc., to you as Infante Don Pedro of Aragon, health as to one whom we love and esteem, and to whom we wish fortune and honour. We would have you know that the Infantes Don Fernando and Don Juan, our cousins and the brothers of the King of Aragon, living with us, and in our kingdom, being our vassals and holding important offices in our household and in our kingdom, wherein the Infante Don Fernando is Grand Adelantado of the frontiers and High Chancellor, and the Infante Don Juan our Grand Standard Bearer, both holding of us extensive domains, for which they owe us service, receiving, moreover, money from our treasury in order to assist us in the war that we wage with the Conde and Don Fernando de Castro, have secretly departed and joined the said Conde, Don Juan Alfonso, and Don Fernando, at the very time when we thought to employ them in our service, and therefore kept them near us. They have taken with them Don Tello, and have entered into a treaty and compact against us. They have, in fact, all and each of them at once commenced numberless illegal acts in this country, and are inciting it to war. And although, by the Grace of God, we hope to restore order, and make an example of those who have borne a part in this great wickedness and

desertion of their lord and King, we have thought it good to inform you of it, certain that you will take it to heart and assist us against the said Infantes. Wherefore, we pray you to be with us against them and their adherents; to attack and lay waste their lands, to take from them all that they have, so that they no longer have the power further to injure us, you, or the King of Aragon.

"In this way you will do what is right, and as we would do for you, were you ever by misfortune placed in a similar strait. From Tordesillas the 28th day of October, in the year of the era 1392 (1354)." ¹

A young statesman's letter, surely. A little naïve, yet dignified, and containing in that enunciation of what he considered should be done to the rebels a hint of the ferocious Pedro of later years.

"As we would do for you, . . ." strikes one as rather boyish, and indeed, it was only a young man of twenty who thus faced the hostility of almost the whole of Castile.

Maria may perhaps have been consulted in the writing of this letter. Perhaps she looked over Pedro's shoulder as he traced out his thoughts—he essentially the man of action to whom the least literary effort must have been something of an affliction.

This epistle evoked only an evasive answer.

Aragon abandoned Don Pedro to his fate.

It was, indeed, a desperate position for a young

¹ Zurita-Llaguno's note to Ayala, p. 149.

man to find himself in, but whatever else he was Pedro was never a coward.

And had he had to deal with one man of strong character and a fixed plan of campaign, things would have gone badly with him indeed. Had Alburquerque been given the supreme command of all the allied rebel forces, there can be little doubt that he would soon have reduced Pedro to a state of submission and impotence. But broken counsels prevailed. Temporising measures; rapine rather than war; inaction rather than battles were the order of the day. The allied forces sought rather to gain their ends by seducing everyone from Pedro's side until mere weight of numbers should deliver him into their hands. Again, their ends were so indefinite that many of the nobles felt them hardly worth the risk of a pitched battle. On the rebel side, everyone was waiting for some advantage to happen to themselves.

And then Alburquerque died. Whether naturally or by poison is not definitely known, for the two original copies of the chronicle differ.¹ Maestre Pablo, his physician, is suspected of having offered him a draught of a deadly character in the guise of a drug for some slight indisposition from which he was suffering. Don Pedro, at any rate, if not an accessory before the fact, made himself one after the fact by liberally rewarding this Italian doctor for his useful absentmindedness.

To his deathbed the old Portuguese minister

¹ The two MSS., known as the *abreviada* and the *vulgar*.

called his friends and vassals, and when all these were assembled in the room at Medina del Campo, he made them a little speech.

“Make no truce with the King,” he commanded, “until my wrongs are satisfied. When I am dead, you shall carry my body at the head of the army wherever it goes, so long as the war lasts, and do not bury me until it is finished and I am avenged.”

The rough and untempered nobles heard these strange words with awe and sorrow, and promised their dying master their observance of his request.

And when he was dead, they placed him in his coffin, and set it before the army as he had directed. And when deliberations were in progress, and a matter required decision, the leaders all repaired to the side of the corpse, and asked it what they should do.

And Cabeza de Vaca, who had been Major-Domo to the dead, replied always to the questions in his master's name.

CHAPTER X

ONCE UPON A TIME

"On n'aime plus comme on aimoit jadis."

—Amours du bon vieux tems.

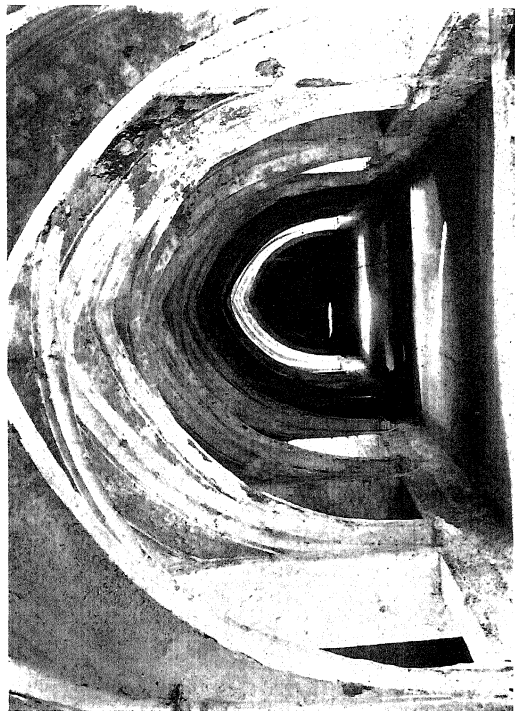
ONCE upon a time, there lived a king in a beautiful country beyond the mountains. His was a wonderful land, so full of sunshine and life, that the people of all the neighbouring countries said that the men and women there did nothing in all the world but make love to each other.¹ They spent, said these folk, all their days in making assignations and all their nights in keeping them.

And the king of these people, who was a young man, made more love than anybody else.

He had, indeed, a palace of great beauty in the chief city of the land. Its walls were of the whitest, so white and wonderful that, when it snowed, which it did but rarely, people might have said—"How dirty all the roofs are to-day!" And it was the merest vanity to call anything blue after looking at their sky.

The palace gardens were all perfume and colour. Lemon and orange trees, whose gleaming fruit burned like little lamps of amber and topaz on the slender

¹ There is a Spanish saying to the effect that the Andalusians do nothing but smoke and make love.



BATHS OF MARIA DE PADILLA, THE ALCAZAR, SEVILLE

boughs, were rivalled in beauty by oleanders, which seemed to rock themselves in dreamy ecstasies at their own faint, crimson beauty.

In these gardens there were fountains that spurted little columns of silver from their slender throats, for sheer joy of living, and in a certain grove behind some orange trees a wonderful open-air bath.¹ Here often bathed the favourite Sultana of this king, while the orange and lemon trees that grew around drew closer together, and held out their skirts like dancing girls so that not even the wind might play Peeping Tom to their beautiful charge. This lady was paid court to by all the nobles and knights in attendance on the young king, and it became fashionable for the gallants of the court to drink of the waters of the bath after the favourite had left it.²

The name of this wonderful city, which burned like a full-blown rose on the bosom of Spain, was Seville ; the fairy palace was its Alcazar ; the lady, Maria, and the King, Don Pedro.

Seville, the fair capital of Andalusia, was among all the cities that were under the sway of Peter the Cruel, the one most intimately connected with him. It was his favourite city, as its Alcazar was his favourite palace. It existed in Roman times, when it was called Hispalis, and, under the dominion of the Moors, it had borne the name of Ishbilyah.

In Don Pedro's day it must have worn a very

¹ Maria de Padilla's bath, still shown in the gardens of the Alcazar at Seville.

² This is related of Maria de Padilla.

oriental aspect. The place was full of Moorish workmen, for it was mainly by the hands of his African subjects that the King was able to secure that extension and restoration of the Alcazar which he had so much at heart. Don Pedro, in fact, lived in some measure in Seville the life of an Eastern despot. "What Harun-'al-Rashid is," we read, "in the 'Story of Bagdad' is this ferocious monarch in the annals of Seville." If only Don Juan Tenorio had carried out the literary part of his career as a Castilian Petronius, what a story of the doings of Pedro and his companions there would be to tell. As it is, there are many tales and legends of his amours and escapades in this city, which has ever been renowned for gallantry. Don Pedro was a very gallant person, and in his day he seems thoroughly to have sustained the reputation of his Andalusian capital.

Often, we know, did he wander through the city's ways at night, eager for adventure, curious to see for himself the lives and manners of his subjects in a way that made his memory with them always an object of their affection.

Turning now into the strange ways of the Ghetto, watching the artisans, the smiths, and merchants working or bargaining in the street or on their doorsteps; smiling now at a pretty face, and noting, perhaps, the address of its owner; now interrupting some dispute of the people and declaring his identity to give them the benefit of a summary, kingly verdict, he went his way among them by day or night. By reason of these acts of royal Bohemianism, Pedro

won for himself among the people a kind of affectionate reputation for a certain capricious justice, which was generally in favour of the people as against the nobles.

If monarchs would only think of it, there is nothing easier than to please the people. They make no extravagant demands on their king's charity or time. Prove to them, O kings, that you are human just as they, in one or two particulars at any rate, and they will let your imagined divinity shield all your other deeds.

Kiss somebody's child, make love to somebody's daughter, execute some piece of poetic justice, and the great, sentimental populace will take you to its heart for ever. One of the surest ways for a king to win the affections of his subjects is for him to have a child. It is so natural that the crowd thinks it extraordinary. For them, it makes their own child-getting and bearing more original, daring, and aristocratic.

One night Don Pedro was in his dressing-room disguising himself for an adventure. Laughing over his disguise with a companion, Pedro bid him good-night, declining his company, saying he would fare alone on this occasion.

In all the sweet unreasonableness of twenty then ; disguised, singing perhaps softly to himself, and ready to defy man or devil, while walking in the city, he was struck by the attitude of a man standing at the end of a narrow street.

The stranger's manner seems to have irritated the King.

At the end of the road which the stranger appeared

thus to be barring was, tradition says, a friend engaged in amorous chatter with a woman.

The stranger's business was to secure an uninterrupted audience. This method of love-making is, I believe, common in many southern countries. As a rule, people respect the temporary closing of the thoroughfare, in the hope that they may themselves be similarly favoured should occasion ever arise.

Don Pedro, however, sought to force his way past the stranger, whereon swords were drawn, and the defender of the thoroughfare died at the point of the King's blade.

At the approach of justice and the night-watchmen, Don Pedro took to flight. He regained the Alcazar, hoping that his identity would remain undiscovered, although there lingered in his mind a confused recollection of an old woman with a lamp whom the din and clatter of steel had called to her door. It came to his mind, too, when he had time to think over the whole matter, that he had just promulgated an edict making the magistrates of the city's police responsible with their lives for the maintenance of good conduct and order throughout Seville.

Don Pedro saw in these circumstances just the sarcastic kind of joke he could thoroughly appreciate.

He summoned the alcade, and told him that he expected his edict to be obeyed, and the murderer to be brought to immediate justice.

At the inquiry which followed, the old dame who had witnessed the episode related, that, though the combatants had hidden their faces, she had caught a

glimpse of the murderer and—*had heard his knees crack*, as he walked away. Her evidence made a stir, for this peculiarity of Don Pedro's walking was common knowledge in the city.

The circumstance was enough to identify him with the crime. Much pained by the uncourtierlike turn which the evidence had taken, and naturally highly embarrassed the magistrate did not at first quite know what to do.

The method obvious to fourteenth century justice was either to punish the *old woman* or to reward her very handsomely, reward her to the point where she could comfortably perjure herself without loss of self-respect.

The proper punishment for the murderer was beheading and exposure of his head at the place where the crime had occurred.

The alcade was troubled, but found a way out.

Remembering his master's injunction, and knowing Pedro's temper he felt that the case called for an original exercise of justice. He invited the King to attend the execution of the murderer. Don Pedro arrived, highly amused and curious as to what turn things had taken. At the place appointed, he found an effigy of himself hanging by the neck. Fantastic sentences of this kind were what the Castilian always delighted in, so he commended the alcade, saying that justice had been done.

In remembrance of the occasion, Pedro ordered that a model of his head should be placed in a niche at the spot where the duel had taken place. A stone replica

of the original bust in *terre cuite* is, I believe, still to be seen in the *Calle del Candilejo* in Seville.

Many such adventures had Don Pedro if we may believe the poets and romancers of Spain, adventures often of a nature more tender, more intimately personal and more delicate. Pretty trysts, the fluttering of hearts and hopes in quiet homes, assignations ; in fact the whole stock-in-trade of a naughty little French book of Confessions or *Mémoires privées*.

Material, perhaps, for a little Boccaccio, or Brantôme or a Faublas with *maris complaisants*, and baggages bundled in and out of the palace by stealth at night, and amiable prelates and infuriated fathers and all the rest of it.

Elvira that would, and Doña Juana that would not, and Isabel that was never asked, and the story of the "Two Gold Candlesticks" and "The Notary's Daughter," and many another "most pleasant and delectable tale."

Seville has been always a true city of romance. Romance, gallantry, and passion were there different from that of other famous and ancient capitals. More simple and passionate than the decadent *macabre* manners of the Rome of Nero or Heliogabalus ; not artificial and precious as it gleams at us from the paintings of Boucher, Watteau, and Fragonard : large, primitive, fierce, voluptuous, like the south itself.

But if Seville had its coloured side, there was, too, a black and mysterious portion of it.

In Seville and Toledo¹ strange sorceries and magic were wrought. Lonely students and crack-brained ascetics turned the stream of their fierce energy on wild and extravagant superstitions and ideas. Seville in the fourteenth century was just one of those hot-beds of humanity whence, in the middle ages, blossomed such strange flowers of passion and thought. In the dark ways of cities like this—in Florence, in Prague, in Vienna—new sects arose, new sorceries were invented, new doubts and schisms hatched. Orders like the Flagellants—not that their origin was Spanish—the Gallois and Galloises, the Fraternity of Penitents in love, the Jacquerie, and curious secret societies and brotherhoods were incubated in the mysterious quarters of such towns as this. There were practised and perfected strange rites of sorcery and devil-worship, and astrologers and witches were to be found posing over unpleasant stews or busying themselves with astrolabe, athanor, and alembic.

In Seville, in Toledo, and in Bordeaux, in this and the succeeding century were practised the rites of The Sabbat. To these times belong the Lycantropes, and Incubi and Succubi.

From such cities as these crept palely into existence, like tortured and misshapen moon-children of the brain, the mysterious theories and gross superstitions of which one may read in old books like those of Gaucius, Remy, Del Rio, Delancre, and Bodin.

It is a fascinating subject, this aspect of the large

¹ Toledo was, perhaps, the centre of the Black Art at this time in Spain. *Scientia Toletana* became a phrase used throughout Europe.

mediæval cities, for a city is so live a thing for all its bricks and clay. It is dull or piquant, blonde or brunette, fair or homely, just like a woman.

I have never been to Seville, but another one—among many voiceless or poor voiced ones I doubt not—a great, great one has been there. I mean Gautier, whose memory may all the nine Muses cherish! the sweet, fantastic, humorous Théophile whose words are like narcissi, and whose laugh is like a cool, fresh breeze that blows among them.

Of Seville, which he visited in the year 1840, he says: "*Séville a toute la pétulance et le bourdonnement de la vie : une folle rumeur plane sur elle à tout instant du jour.*"

And then he speaks of the "*œillades incendiaires*," of the lovely Andalusian women, who, as regards their beauty and manner, are the Maria de Padillas of to-day.

He tells us, however—and it is not difficult to believe it—that these apparently inflammatory glances are really of no precise significance.

"A young Andalusian regards with these passionate looks," he says, "a passing cart, a dog running after his tail, or children playing at bull-fights,"¹ which may well enough stand as true for the Sevillian women of Don Pedro's day. In matters of the passions the South is, in general, primitive. Don Pedro himself was a primitive of chivalry and life let loose in armour on his century.

One admits his sense of humour, which is not a

¹ Gautier, "Voyage en Espagne."



GENERAL VIEW OF SEVILLE (TO-DAY) FROM THE TOP OF THE GIRALDA

prerogative of the primitive man; but a strange, sulphurous kind of humour it is, after all.

More in keeping with the Arabian-Night-like character of Don Pedro's adventures in Seville are the stories of the shoemaker, in which can be detected an Æsopian flavour, the tale of the four judges, and the episode of examination by orange. All of these stories, as in a less degree the one of the King's effigy, bear a strong Oriental influence.

And therefore, be they true or not, they are interesting and illuminating as reflections of the manners of what was in those days almost an African city.

It is said—and the careful Mérimée admits this story into his *Histoire*—that a certain shoemaker, by name Emmanuel Peres, had suffered a grievous injury from the hands of a priest, one Don Jaime de Colminares. The priest had, it is said, deceived and—according to one account—even murdered the sister of this unfortunate cobbler.¹

Taking the law into his own hands, he revenged the family honour at the point of the knife. Arrest followed, and, in due course, appeal by the prisoner to the King.

Asked by Pedro, in cross-examination, what sentence the monastic authorities, to whom alone Don Jaime was amenable, had inflicted on the deceased at his trial, the prisoner answered: "One year's abstention from saying Mass."

To the secular mind of Peres this sentence had seemed

¹ The poet Jose Zorrilla has a play on this episode, *El Zapatero y el Rey*.

grossly inadequate, and had been the cause of his action, as he explained to the King. It seems almost unnecessary to supply the King's decision in this case, for any reader who has studied the principles of poetic justice at all will surely be able to supply it himself. Don Pedro of course forthwith proceeded to order that the shoemaker be punished only to the extent of being forbidden to make any shoes whatsoever for a space of one year.

One day Don Pedro was walking in the gardens of the Alcazar, when there came to him four lawyers who sought his decision as to which of them should be elected the judge of a certain place. Pedro, who must have been either very tired, or have cared very little who his judges were, saw something yellow, like an orange, floating on a little pond near by.

"Tell me," said Don Pedro to the first candidate, "What is that?"

The lawyer who had been expecting, perhaps, a question from the law of the Partidas, replied cheerfully, "An orange, Sire!"

The second, equally relieved and pleased with this new kind of law examination, answered in similar wise.

The third, rendered more careful by the apparent non-success of his two companions, stared hard at the pond to be sure that it was not a lemon after all.

Yet he, too, like the others, answered, "An orange, Sire."

But when it came to the turn of the fourth, going to the pond, he fished out the fruit with a stick, and picking it up in his fingers, examined it carefully.

“Half an orange, Sire,” exclaimed the future judge.

Don Pedro was one day sitting in the Sala de Justicia, when he heard four people discussing the division of a bribe which they had received. They turned out to be four judges, not, it is to be hoped, any of our friends of the last episode. Pedro considered their conversation an act distinctly *ultra vires*, and had them beheaded on the spot.

He decorated his bed-chamber, it is said, with their skulls. At any rate, I believe it is a fact that the portraits of these unfortunates are to be seen in his room in the Alcazar at Seville to-day.

Once upon a time there lived a king in a beautiful country beyond the mountains. . . . He had, indeed, a palace of great beauty, a palace whose walls were so white and wonderful, that when it snowed (if ever it did) the people said . . .

And all the streets were tuneful with the fiddles of love and laughter. And soft breezes came yearning up from Africa with nut-brown hands, whose fingers were tight clasped on spices and perfumes. Great palms slept monotonously in the sunshine, and underneath their shade, white-turbaned moors passed the hours away with tale or story, or the “musky rhymes” of some old Arabian poet.

Ah, once upon a time !

CHAPTER XI

THE QUEEN OF A DAY

SOME families are marked out for adventure and romance by the high gods as surely as are certain animals in their earliest days by man for his diversion, sport, assistance, or food.

The Fates would seem to brand these creatures with extraordinary character, extraordinary beauty, or a sweet, perilous kind of folly, by which they can never be forgotten or mislaid.

"This one," we may imagine them to say, "has a soul of wind and laughter. He shall dance for us when he grows up, in our theatre of Europe. And this woman's beauty and charm will certainly afford us excellent entertainment by-and-by. So we will pitch her where she can set some man alight. The conflagration should prove amusing."

Such folk, perhaps, were the daughters of Don Pedro de Castro, Juana and Inez. The superb love-story of Inez and the Infante of Portugal, certainly one of the most magnificent love-stories of all time, has received in Camoëns' *Lusiad* a national and perhaps a universal tribute.¹

Juana's adventure is not so well known.

She was a careful, proper widow of youth and beauty, when someone told King Peter of her.

¹ *Lusiad*, canto iii., stanzas 118-135.

Passing her widowhood in retreat and in occupations suitable to her condition, says Mariana.

"She was," says Sir J. Dillon, "one of the most beautiful and accomplished persons in Spain. Her manner was perfectly elegant, and she had great innate dignity of mind."

We learn that so properly did she comport herself, that even the busy scandal of those days failed to infect the purity of her character with the least taint or stain.

Don Pedro had had a little quarrel with Maria, and so far had matters gone that the Padilla had announced her intentions of ending her life in the peace and solitude of a convent. Whether despair on her part at ever being able to hold the volatile and treacherous fancy of so wild a prince had brought her to this resolve is not known.

At any rate, it must have been a very real and protracted quarrel, for Pedro wrote to the Pope for authority to found a convent under the patronage of St. Clara, where Maria was to be the Mother Superior.

Don Pedro, who was glad of an opportunity to forget Maria's exhibition of bad temper, proceeded to fall in love with Juana, almost at first sight. The young monarch approached the wooing of her with a desperate and passionate ardour.

But Juana was calm, dignified, and correct.

She was polite, flattered, but reserved.

It was all very well to win a monarch's affections, but to become his mistress was hardly "an occupation suitable to her condition." . . .

Pedro, made desperate by this coldness and unwonted resistance, spoke of marriage. Doña Juana saw then that the affair had become solely a matter of terms. A monarch who is prepared to commit bigamy for one's sake is a very difficult suitor to refuse. It remained to discover if the King could offer marriage. Juana's relatives were determined that, at any rate, the best arrangement possible for her should be made.

She was firm. She insisted on a marriage, so that there was nothing for Pedro to do but to assure everybody that his earlier alliance with Blanche was a mistake, a nullity ; in fact, no marriage at all. By his immediate and most servile courtiers, this announcement was, of course, received with no surprise ; indeed, it was duly endorsed. But Juana wished for something more definite and formal than this.

Two arbiters were appointed to decide the question of the King's fitness and legal capacity for matrimony.

That her confidence might be strengthened, one of the men chosen was a relative of Juana, Enrique Enriquez by name. The other counsellor was Juan Rodriquez de Señabria, a knight of Galicia. The arguments employed to convince these judges may, as Mérimée says, be imagined. The custody of the castles of Jaen, Dueñas, and Castrojeriz was handed over to Enrique Enriquez ; no doubt, that in the solitude and peace of their walls he might be able to give the proposition the calm consideration it needed.

To Cuellar, where the fair Juana was living in a

vortex of scruples and doubts, and harassed by the persuasions of her relatives, Don Pedro hurried with the glad tidings that he was free to marry the lady of his choice.

But Juana was apparently a shrewd young woman. Still there remained in the heart of her some obstinate waverings. To overcome these, she demanded the sanction of the Church. She desired that two prelates should confirm the verdicts of the lay arbiters in order that piety might be added to polity, and sanction to authority. Don Sancho, Bishop of Avila, and Don Juan, Bishop of Salamanca, were sent for, and asked by Don Pedro to declare it their profound and earnest belief that he was free to contract a marriage with whomsoever he should please. And, for the sake of their reputations, it is sad to relate that they acquiesced in the judgment of the two earlier arbiters.

It was no affair of castles or gold for them. They consented, says the chronicle, out of sheer fright, and Llaguno adds that they were afterwards summoned to Rome and severely reprimanded by the Pope.

The King's fierce passion burnt itself out almost at once.

He kissed and ran away.

One day, and one day only, was Juana Queen of Castile, even *de facto*. One night, one night only, did she own the royal love.

Morning dawned on a frowning king, the fire of whose burnt-out passion remained only as ashes of sorrow in a woman's soul.

Juana was given Dueñas, which was taken back

again from the too-complaisant Enriquez together with his two other castles.

Sacrilege, perjury, broken promises to man and woman, all in the course of a bare few days.

For Pedro went away, never to return.

And in her castle of Dueñas, poor Juana was left with her grief and bruised pride.

CHAPTER XII

THE LAYING OF A GHOST

AFTER the death of the Portuguese Minister, Alburquerque, his little army, faithful to its promise, allowed itself to be led by a ghostly commander-in-chief. From city to city, over mountain and plain, went solemnly in the van, covered with its cloth of gold, the corpse of the revengeful statesman—grim burden of its spirit's strange conceit, never permitted the bedding of earth until its mission should be done.

But the war or revolt was conducted in a spirit of lethargy. Conferences took the place of battles.

It was like a parliament grown military and run amuck, or a host of soldiers, stricken with a foolish desire for speech.

The League of rebellious factions arranged a great conference and discussion with Don Pedro at Toro. The affording of hospitality to the ambassadors of the League was the cause of the King's losing one of his closest adherents and friends.

Among the three men chosen by the confederates to lay their position and requests before his Majesty was Pero Carillo, who seems to have been unable to keep out of the front of things for any length of time.

It was particularly over the lodging and entertaining

of Pero that the quarrel between Fernando Alvarez de Toledo and Alfonso Jufre Tenorio arose. Pero was evidently a man of wit and influence, as we have seen him to be a man of character and initiative. Probably he was in good esteem with the leaders of the opposing hosts, and was a man whose favour it was desirable to enjoy. Tenorio and Alvarez came to blows over this dispute, and brought half a dozen other courtiers into their quarrel, which ended in the death of one of these men. The King, in deciding the merits of the case, seems to have favoured the position of Alvarez, which so offended the Tenorios, that they—Juan and Alfonso—forthwith left Pedro and deserted to the allies.

The inclemency of the weather, and the unsuitability of the conditions for the feeding and supplying of a large army in the open country compelled the allied troops to remove from their encampments. They proceeded towards Morales, making, as they went, a show of arms and a great display of pomp before the eyes of their King. Pedro, seeing in this move an opportunity, left Toro with a hundred horsemen for the castle of Urueña, where Maria was. Hardly was the dust of his soldier's horses settled, than Don Pedro suffered betrayal at the hands of one with whom he might at any rate have thought himself safe.

The Queen-mother, who had been left in charge of the little garrison at Toro, took the opportunity of bringing things to a head by inviting the approach of the Infante of Aragon, to whom she

promised the fortress's surrender. She bade him come with all speed—no speed we may well imagine could have been too quick—for when you are about to betray your son, it is stupid to be caught in the middle of your treachery by its object and victim.

The leaguers returned in haste. Now they had everybody on their side that they could very well have, except the King himself. Don Pedro had now neither money nor provisions; his army was reduced to a hundred soldiers; his only place of refuge was a castle which could not maintain a siege of many days. To Urueña the allies despatched a deputation, primed this time with few and haughty words—a king is, after all, only the embodiment of the universal desire for submission in his subjects—and asked, demanded rather, Don Pedro's return to Toro. And then followed a small, rather pathetic little council.

There remained to the King Don Diego de Padilla, Master of Calatrava, Juan de Henestrosa, Gutier de Toledo then (for what it was worth) Respostero Major, Simuel Levi, and—Maria de Padilla.

Maria, at any rate, was faithful. She is the indubitable heroine of this Spanish melodrama, as spotless in Act IV. as in Act I. Hand in hand did the noble lovers con this lesson of sorrow and humility. Maria was there to salve those bitter hurts, stanch that great lesion of despair in the royal heart, comfort, console, allay.

Of the other counsellors, Diego Padilla was in no hurry to return to Toro, where he would have to

account to certain ones for the murder of Nuñez de Padro. And in a similar position was Toledo, in whose castle of Talavera poor Leonor de Guzman, Enrique's mother, had met her death.

Here, in different forms, were excellent reasons why the Court should not return to Toro.

But Juan de Henestrosa thought otherwise. In a speech of apparent generosity and regard for the King, he advised his return to Toro. One cannot vouch for his disinterestedness: it can only be said that his interest in the matter is not patent, but it seems probable that Henestrosa was really a man of some innate generosity, to judge from his share in later happenings in Don Pedro's reign.

"Juan de Henestrosa," recites Ayala, "was a good knight, and he said to the King that his counsel was that he should go to Toro to the queens, Doña Maria, his mother, and Doña Leonor, his aunt, and all the great lords of his kingdom, and come to agreement with them, and not imperil his kingdom for his sake, nor for that of Don Diego Garcia, the brother of Doña Maria de Padilla. For the Infante Don Fernando de Aragon was on the other side, and he was the next heir to Castile since the King had no legitimate heirs, and they might make him King if things went on so ill as they did at present. And he said, moreover, that since he advised the King to go to Toro he would go with him, and though he knew those lords bore him ill-will because he was the uncle of Doña Maria de Padilla, not for this nor for fear of death would he flinch from going with the King.

And the King held these words and counsel for good service.”¹

Henestrosa prevailed ; indeed there was little option left to Don Pedro in the matter. If he did not go to the allies, it was more than probable that they would come and fetch him in a manner too humiliating to think of.

So the King set out with his little escort, all unarmed and mounted upon mules.

The master of Calatrava and Gutier Fernandez de Toledo asked to be excused, and stayed behind.

This was a bitter hour for Peter the Cruel. At the head of a small and insignificant retinue, he came to the magnificent hosts of the confederates. These, well-mounted, and gorgeously attired in vestures through which swords and daggers were permitted to appear with ostentatious carelessness, surrounded their young king, in this his hour of humility and defeat.

Memories of the old times at Torrijos, when, among all his courtiers and in the company of his brothers, he had enjoyed days of sport and chivalry, and nights of pleasure, must have troubled his memory. Masters, servants, courtiers, friends, brothers—mother even, had proved false ; Maria alone remained to him.

Still yielding their sovereign external signs of respect, the nobles and captains of the Confederates kissed his hands, and conducted him to the city with loud acclamations of joy, caracoling about him,

¹ Ayala, 1354, Cap. XXXIV.

performing fantasias, pursuing one another, and hurling *cañas* in the Moorish fashion.

We may imagine with what feelings Don Pedro saw these exhibitions of joy, which were to him but witnesses to the delight of his jailers. When his brother Enrique came forward to greet him, it was more than a young king of twenty, broken in his pride, could endure.

That fierce and passionate heart, trembled at its desolation and despair. Supreme self-pity choked the royal breast and melted into tears.

"May God be merciful to you," cried Pedro, "for my part I pardon you." And if we may doubt the sincerity of the pardon, we must see here, at any rate, the cry of a hurt proud nature, the sob of a strong-willed boy whom fortune and favour have deserted. Almost like a naughty child, whose parents have gathered him within their authority once more, was the King compelled to listen to his mother's reproof.

Pedro's pride was counting up the toll of all these insults and humiliations against a terrible hour, a terrible day of revenge. A man who has been thoroughly a king, and has braved and lorded it for months, can hardly relish being treated again like a little boy. A king who has tender witnesses to his manhood and maturity, will not bear lightly the taunt of youth.

Don Pedro's aunt, the Queen of Aragon, read him a little sermon, her second effort in this direction.

"Good nephew," she said, "it becomes you well

thus to show yourself in the midst of all the grandees of your kingdom, instead of wandering from castle to castle to escape your lawful wife. But it is not your fault, youth that you are ; it is all through these wicked men who have corrupted you, especially one Juan de Henestrosa, whom we see here with Don Simuel el Levi, and others like them. We will now have them removed, and will place about you men of character, who will care for your honour as well as your interests.”¹

“ Henestrosa has always served me faithfully,” cried Pedro. “ I look to it that he will be treated with respect.”

As a matter of fact, he was placed in the custody of the Infante Don Fernando, while the others of the few officers who had remained faithful to their Sovereign suffered the immediate loss of their dignities and positions.

The King was a prisoner.

Though it was not as jailer that Don Fadrique was charged with the safe custody of Pedro, that was what his office actually meant. The allies spoke of Don Fadrique as the King’s Chamberlain, and, if Pedro was not near, no doubt they smiled. Don Fernando of Aragon became Grand Chancellor, the Infante Don Juan, Grand Standard Bearer.

The King was placed in an ecclesiastical palace, where his safe custody was immediately detailed to Don Lopez de Bendaña. One of Don Fadrique’s knights slept in the King’s chamber. Orders were

¹ Ayala, 1354, Cap. XXXV.

passed that he was not to be allowed out of sight for a moment, and his presence was forbidden to anyone without the express permission of the Master of Santiago. For the rest, the successful Leaguers spent most of their time in dividing the spoil of offices, honours, and castles amongst themselves.

One other thing was added to complete Don Pedro's sorrow and misfortune. That pride of his, so much bruised and wounded of late, was to receive another shock.

Don Fernando de Castro, whose dignity had suffered by the King's treatment of his sister, Juana, determined to avenge himself by a piece of retribution in keeping with that poetic justice which seems to have been so much in favour in these times.

He announced his intention of marrying the King's half-sister, Juana, the daughter of Alfonso XI. and the De Guzman. Her dowry was, of course, regal, like that of all the children of Leonor.¹

Peter protested in vain against this alliance, so humiliating to his family and himself. The Conde would also, one might imagine, have objected to this marriage of his sister beneath her rank, but he played instead the part of head of the family and gave his sister away at the wedding, which was celebrated with all magnificence in the cathedral of Toro.

A certain knight of the name of Pero Carillo watched this marriage with interested eyes for a reason that will later be noticed.

¹ De Castro was here able to please his inclinations as well, for Ayala says "he had loved her for a long time."

And now at length is the ghost laid.

Alburquerque's remains were solemnly buried a day or two after this marriage. All classes and factions attended the ceremony, for the old statesman had inspired great respect during his life. At last might his bitter, revengeful heart sleep in peace, and his bones lie calmly in the earth with no tingle and jar of hate within them.

Sleep, old eyes ! and drowse softly in death, outworn wise old head : you were tutor to the last, and you teach, even from your tomb.

Now the earth will wrap you like a prayer that enfolds one's misery and fear in peace, and your soul go singing to the stars for the sweet content put in the old shell of it.

No more your spirit, like a mateless thing, need wander over plains, and your army can go comfortably to perdition or success, with an ordinary, fallible commander of flesh and blood.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ESCAPE FROM TORO

PETER THE CRUEL was not the man to occupy a false and undignified position a moment longer than it was forced upon him. For, much as one may shudder at the many revolting barbarities and horrors which he perpetrated during his not lengthy reign, it must be recognised that, until his cruelty became a disease, he was a man of character, strength, and determination. To explain the origin and cause of that fierce and awful passion of his which brought so many innocent men and women to sudden and fearful death is by no means to excuse or palliate it.

Don Pedro, in whose heart there were now smouldering flames of suspicion, hate, and vengeance, began to employ all the craftiness within him—the craftiness of his African forebears.

When there were so many masters, there were likely to be some who were in truth but servants in disguise. Dissensions were not long in coming to break up the harmony of the allies' councils and policy. Don Pedro found a chance before long.

The very fact of the formation of a definite court-party cabal was enough to throw the folk who were,

so to speak, out of office, also out of temper with those that were in.

"The new administration, attending chiefly to improve their fortune, had already split into factions, so that the majority which formed the Court at Toro, soon found it difficult to support their influence."¹

It remained for an energetic spirit like Don Pedro to find the weak point in the front opposed to him. This he discovered in the persons of the Infantes of Aragon. Now that success had come to the arms of the allies, the Castilians among them affected to see in the persons of these two young princes, aliens seeking merely to enrich themselves at the expense of the first country in Christian Spain. A convenient and opportunist patriotism arose in the breasts of the native born against these young princes.

And the populace sided rather with Don Pedro. Always a favourite with them for the sentimental, melodramatic, popular attitude which he was pleased to adopt towards them, he now received in return the suffrages of their pity and sympathy.

Don Pedro was the man of the hour. His misfortunes and his youth were making a sort of hero of him among folk to whom he was no more than a symbol or fetish of authority not too unamiable and hard. He stood to them as a kind of vice-regent of the ultimate right, and to see Providence's deputy suffer is always a bitter occupation for simple, honest hearts. Even his errors partook in the minds of the crowd of a kind of ecstatic justice, and were

¹ Mérimée.

hailed as the fruit of a superior, uncomprehended, cleverness.

With here a wedge and there a wedge to help him, it could not have been long before Don Pedro came into his own again. Terms were discussed with the Infantes, and the price of their assistance or complaisance was ascertained and fixed.

The actual manner of the King's escape from Toro is as follows :—

A little while after the commencement of his captivity there, he had been granted permission to indulge himself under due surveillance in his favourite occupation of the chase. Hunting parties were arranged for him, in which, in spite of all the precautions taken, a certain amount of freedom was afforded. During these occasions assistance was sought for and obtained by Pedro from some of the knights told off to be his guard.

Old Simuel Levi, the wise and crafty Jew, who served Don Pedro so well as treasurer and master of many a secret negotiation, had contrived by means of bribes to be allowed to accompany the King on these hawking expeditions.

As a result, a treaty was entered into by Don Pedro and the Infantes of Aragon, whereby these princes pledged themselves to afford the imprisoned King the support of their arms.

This allegiance was, of course, not promised without liberal security, but in such a straitened hour Don Pedro would have promised his kingdom for the opportunity of denying the pledge afterwards.

One day the King left Toro with a hunting party including Levi, and a guard of about 200 men. It was very early, just after break of day. The King had his falcon on his wrist, and in his heart a very straining falcon of hope and anxiety, for it was really something more important than the pursuit of birds that sent him thus early into the country.

Luckily for the plan of escape there was a mist in the forest where the royal party were riding. Fortune seemed to be aiding the King. At a certain spot, agreed on before hand, there was a knight waiting with a fresh horse and a lance.

The King had managed to separate himself a little from the body of his retinue or guard, and jumping into the saddle of his new mount, he spurred it into a gallop and completely broke away from the escort.

It was while they were engaged in changing horses that Pedro, unwilling to let the moment escape him, challenged his fate.

"If any one chooses to follow me," he said to the knights around him, "he may do so; and the others may return, for I am going another way."¹

Then Jew, and King, and a few men-at-arms, set out at a gallop for Segovia, where the gold of the royal treasurer had already prepared them a welcome.

When he arrived at the Alcazar of Segovia, Pedro found a town quite as pleased to see him as he had any

¹ This conversation is not in the original chronicle. I give it on Dillon's authority. His I cannot trace, but it is probably some old Compendio.

reason to expect. Quickly a little court of temporary officials was formed, and plans were devised for the immediate future.

One of Don Pedro's first acts was to write a letter to the Queen-mother in Toro, demanding the restoration to himself of the Great Seal of the land and the other insignia of his dignity, which circumstances had brought into her keeping.

He added, significantly, that if they were not returned to him he had "silver and iron wherewith to fabricate others."

At Toro they did not care to disobey the command of the King, and meekly did as they were ordered. There arose immediately, on the discovery of Pedro's escape, a great tumult and excitement. Accusations of treachery flew about broadcast. Suspicion lurked in every man's eye. No room in the castle was without its heated disputants or quaking courtiers, terribly afraid at the latest turn of things. Everybody began to blame everybody else, and the never-too-well united allies split again into further factions and parties.

Of Don Tello, in whose keeping the King had been on the day of his escape, it was said that he had calmly connived at it, but Ayala writes that neither he nor Enrique nor de Castro were in the plot with the Infantes.

Not immediately was the secret treaty between Pedro and the Infantes of Aragon made public.

But the departure of Doña Leonor from Toro with her two sons to the town of Roa was a separation and

breaking with the allies which hinted to Castile the ultimate features of that undertaking.

Gradually the King's adherents rallied round him in Segovia. There many *Ricos Hombres* flocked to his standard. Among them were Juan de la Cerda, Alvar de Castro, brother of the Fernando who assisted in the escape itself.

But Pedro, with an instinct for the feeling of the country towards him and his cause, determined to bring matters to a definite issue by a move which practically amounted to asking the suffrage of his people. He convoked the commons at Burgos, and, to the deputies of his various cities and to his nobles then gathered in Cortes, stated the rigours and misfortunes of his case.

Popular feeling, which all along had afforded him its silent sympathy in his time of practical imprisonment, now took a more definite and helpful attitude. The Commons, while acceding in the main to his demand for authority, men, and money, naturally enough took the opportunity of obtaining from the King, who now came to them almost in the guise of a petitioner, the redress of some of their own grievances and the establishment of some privileges.

This period must be recognized as a turning-point in the life of the subject of this memoir. From the time of his escape from Toro, Peter lived, one might say, absolutely for himself and his own ends. To forward these same ends he was prepared to do almost anything. Out of the agony of wounded self-love, and from the hurt of youthful pride and bruised

confidence, the traditional Pedro was born, Pedro the Cruel, the desperate, remorseless murderer and libertine, who has come down to us in history's pages. All confidence in humanity's generosity or disinterestedness seems to have escaped the King after the betrayals and treacheries which drove him captive into Toro. His nature then apprehended the mood and essence of the Time Spirit of the fourteenth century, as we must all appreciate one day that of our own.

In a very little while, power began to flow back to him. At the end of a month or so after his escape, Don Pedro found himself at the head of an army of quite formidable proportions. When he had brought the sitting of the deputies at Burgos to a close, he began to look about for an opportunity to attack some of his old enemies.

At Medina del Campo, some of these plans of revenge, which we may be sure Pedro had been nursing during all the period of his captivity, came to fruition. It was only a beginning. Don Pedro meant to answer his country's treachery to himself with a really royal vengeance.

In the Holy Week, he had Pedro Ruiz de Villegas and Sancho de Rojas executed without trial.

Many other nobles were thrown into prison at the same time. Why those two knights were chosen as the objects of the King's ire is not known; probably they were persons in whom he had reposed for a while some especial confidence, folk to whom he had given some mission; folk therefore whose defection had in it some intimately irritating note.

Their death was in some measure a tocsin for the campaign against his brothers and those members of the league who had not yet managed to qualify their late treason with some act of fortunate or fortuitous loyalty. The people in Toro, rather anxious at the signs of the returning power of the King, liberated Juan de Henestrosa on condition that he should act as a sort of ambassador for them with Don Pedro.

Henestrosa, who could give promises as well as anybody else, gave them his word in this regard, but found in freedom a ready oblivion of the needs of his jailers.

All Castile was now on tip-toe of wonder as to how matters would arrange themselves. The country at large, though it counted for little then, had an instinctive preference for peace and quiet, which it was never allowed by its masters to enjoy. And in crises, when fates hung in the balance, when the scales of polity and influence pointed neither up nor down but held an annoying and troublesome middle-way, it was particularly unfortunate for it. Try as it would to be neutral, there arose times when it had to be on one side or another. And mistakes of judgment on these occasions brought with them speedy and awful retribution.

Toledo, which as far as its merchants and citizens went, wished principally to be left alone, had to make choice between Don Pedro and Don Enrique and his brother. It desired to do nothing of the kind. It only asked to be left alone.

But marching on it in all the dreadful and murderous

panoply of war were severally the armies of Don Pedro and that of his brothers, Enrique and Fadrique.

Toledo could not help itself; it was impossible to decline the duty of host to two such vigorous and commanding visitors.

But which was to be the guest?

Ah, that should be as might transpire. If the truth must be told—the stronger.

Queen Blanche, whose married life had so far been spent mainly in prison, was in the Alcazar at Toledo, drawing what consolation she could for her desolation and distress from the long Latin letters which Pope Innocent VI. kept sending her,¹ holding the kind and loving hands of Doña Leonor de Soldena, whose devotion to the young Queen won from the Holy Father a tribute of his respect and admiration.

The citizens of Toledo themselves had been made the objects of a letter from Avignon, wherein they were exhorted to neglect nothing which might sweeten the lot of the unfortunate Queen.

Toledo was never at any time popular with Don Pedro nor he with it. Seville was the city of his heart. However, it cared little more for the Conde de Trastamara or the Master of Santiago. The great majority of the townspeople were disgusted with them all, and were for shutting the city gates to all armed men. The two bastards were the first to arrive before the walls. They sent to the burghers a request for a conference, saying that they were come to defend the

¹ “*Tuque preter eterne retributionis premium nostram et apostolice sedis benedictionem et gratiam uberius merearis,*” as he wrote. *Lettres du Pape Innocent VI.*

town against the King. The town council expressed its pleasure at seeing their Highnesses, and offered them some refreshment, but steadfastly kept the gates closed.

The young princes were annoyed and puzzled. Here, they thought, were people who would have to be protected in spite of themselves.

Whatever would happen to Blanche, they asked the burghers, if Pedro should descend on her and the town?

"The Queen has nothing to fear whilst under our protection," said these sturdy townsmen. "Our walls are high and we know how to defend them ourselves. Besides," they added, "we have sent deputies to the King, and we will not treat with him without stipulating for honourable conditions for you."

Don Enrique, who could not have been at all pleased to find his professional services so lightly valued, seems to have determined nevertheless to save the burghers in spite of themselves. Towards night, he pretended to retire, but in reality made a detour which brought him to another part of the ramparts, which was in possession of some of the few spirits in Toledo who were anxious for a fight, and who had agreed to attach themselves to the Conde's side.

Over the bridge of Alcantara the next day, the 7th May 1355, in the peace of the city's siesta, the men and captains of Don Enrique and his brother entered the city of Toledo.

Waving their banners and shouting, they rushed

through the streets causing, naturally, great excitement and commotion. Toledo was a city which contained very many Jews. Indeed, for years, it had possessed one of the largest Ghettos in Europe, and had been from most remote times a centre of Hebrew learning, commerce, medicine, and science. The soldiers of the two royal princes found their entry into the Grand Jewry barred, but with much din and disturbance they made their way into the Alcana, or quarter of the Jewish traders. Thither they were drawn, no doubt, by the commodities of all kinds exposed for sale, and by the fact that the Jews were held a peaceable folk who had much money.

A succession of brutal massacres ensued. Shops and warehouses were pillaged, and a great wave of crime and violence passed over the city. Death was meted out to all who in any way opposed the violent instincts of the soldiery, and hundreds of Jews and Jewesses of every age were butchered in the course of a few hours. The night following the irruption of the Conde's army witnessed a scene of violence and horror.

While the mercenaries and nobles of the Pretenders were thus engaged, messengers were sent to Don Pedro, to whom the city now looked for protection. He marched all the night with his force, and by dawn was before Toledo's walls.

The Leaguers threw themselves quickly into a position of defence, but the carousals and riotous conduct of the past night brought them with dulled spirits to meet the fresher soldiers of the King. Don

Pedro attacked immediately, and almost at once the defenders gave way.

The Jews who loved Don Pedro, and could now scarcely have much affection for De Trastamara, assisted the warriors of the King to make an entrance into the town.

Don Enrique and Don Fadrique sought to animate their men by word and example, but the day was for Don Pedro. Gradually the Leaguers were driven from post to post, until they flew, scattered in threes and fours, to seek refuge in churches or wherever else they could find an asylum. Soon the bugles of retreat sounded for the allies, and the Conde and his brother, with a thousand or so men, left the city by the Alcantara gate at the very moment that the troops of Don Pedro were pouring over the St Martin's bridge into the town.

Toledo now belonged to the King. The Alcazar opened its gates to him, and it is not difficult to imagine that Blanche heard of the success of her husband with misgiving and despair.

She was safe, however, for the King took no notice of her, beyond ordering her away to the security of another prison.

As soon as the success of the Royalist party was placed beyond question, there was a scampering of traitors and turncoats over the bridges for safety. The vengeance of the King was rapidly becoming proverbial. Proud Toledo trembled, and heard in fancy the rattle of tumbrils.

Nor was it deceived. Don Pedro was for im-

mediate pursuit of his brothers, but his own troops found occupations in the city too fascinating to allow of discipline, and like the soldiers of the Conde, gave themselves up to pillage and rapine.

Twenty-two burghers were beheaded as a solemn warning to all such folk that they should always be on the winning side in political disputes. Two or three knights suffered the same fate, and many more escaped it, only to suffer imprisonment instead. Meanwhile Don Pedro had been excommunicated by solemn decree from Avignon since the month of January, and his country laid under papal interdict. So pleased was he with himself and the turn of affairs at Toledo that he took the pains to write to Innocent VI. a letter, advising him of the success of his arms and promising to amend his marital ways and to go and live with Blanche. The Pope had written him some dozens of epistles urging the necessity of this, but up till this moment Pedro seems to have treated them with disrespectful contempt and silence. This answer of his may have been born of that sense of *diablerie* and irony, which was so much a part of his character, for he can never have had the slightest intention of doing any of the things whereof he wrote.

The Pope was delighted, however, and suspected no sarcasm in the ready promises. We can read his answer in Letter xxxv. of M. Daumet's collection.

It begins :—

“Carisimo in Christo filio Petro regi Castille et Legionis illustri salutem, etc.,” and in resounding Latin periods tells the King that he is glad to hear of his good

resolutions. "Litteras tuas . . . benigne recipimus," he says.

Meanwhile Don Pedro met Maria secretly, and formulated plans for revenge against the now rapidly dissolving League.

CHAPTER XIV

TRAGEDY

PEDRO'S reign about this time was mainly distinguished for a succession of brutal murders.

Concentrated in Toro there remained the extremists and the now quickly-dissolving League. In this fortress were gathered those who could by no means shift the responsibility of their late actions on to somebody else's shoulders by a deft act of policy. Here were the finalists, the last hopes, the compromised beyond all repair whom no deceit could patch into favour again. Awaiting the oncoming of the royal forces were, amongst others, Ruy Gonzalez de Castañeda, the head of the Lara faction; Pero Estebañez Carpentero, now master of Calatrava; Martin Telho, the Portuguese whom love of Queen Maria had brought into this land of trouble and death, and Alfonso Tellez Giron, an important knight.

Toro was strongly fortified and well provisioned. There seemed every prospect of the Leaguers offering a prolonged and vigorous defence.

Pedro came up to the walls of the place, and then fell back a little to Morales, where he established himself and ordered preparations for the reduction of the League's Citadel. Don Enrique availed himself

of the careless watch put upon Toro by the King's men to leave his allies to their fate. Promising that he would go to Galicia and join Fernando de Castro, he declared to the besieged that he would return to them with large reinforcements.

Of course he had no intention of doing anything of the kind. Meanwhile, in Biscay, Don Tello was at war with the Infante of Aragon, so that the allies were now thoroughly split up and divided amongst themselves.

Outside Toro, the preparations for the capture of the place proceeded with extreme leisureliness.

After two and a half months, the siege was really begun. The royal troops encamped upon the left bank of the river Duero, which ran along the walls of the place. There they collected many implements of attack such as catapults, ballistas, and bombards.

Things went on slowly for some time, and numerous ineffectual skirmishings were the principal evidences of the siege.

The whole country suffered from the effects of almost incessant strife between small and perpetually self-dividing factions.

Towards the beginning of December, a vigorous onslaught was made on the town by the investing force. The tower which defended the bridge over the Duero was carried after a prolonged and desperate fight.

The loss of this outpost of defence proved a great blow to the spirits of the besieged. The soldiery began to complain that the burghers sold them food only at high and exorbitant prices, and the leaders and nobles

were in fear and doubt. They knew that they had little hope of mercy in case of surrender, and yet in the absence of relief, protraction of their defence seemed only a prolongation of their misery. Discord and disaffection began to ferment. The only hope seemed to be in their looking for safety at each other's expense. So messages found an unofficial way to the King's ear from several nobles of the garrison, containing offers of surrender in return for a pardon.

The burghers, who were always an alien body to the feudal knights and Hidalgos, sought also on their own behalf some relief from the intolerable condition of things. Unknown to the military commanders of the place they approached the royalists with peaceful proposals, by which their own safety was to be secured without any question as to that of anyone else.

A certain merchant, Garci Triguero, obtained the promise of a free pardon for himself and his fellow citizens upon condition of opening the city's gates to the royal troops.

It was the 24th January 1356, and on this day Triguero was on guard at the city's gate. A nocturnal attack was to be made, and the gates thrown open to the besiegers by Garci.

But earlier in the day, Don Pedro, riding along the river's bank, perceived on an island in midstream, which still belonged to the besieged, Don Fadrique accompanied by a few knights. The King recognised his brother, and was recognised by him and his party.

Juan de Henestrosa, leaving the King's side, urged his horse right down to the water's edge, and called

out to the master of Santiago. The river was narrow enough to allow conversation to be audible from bank to bank.

Fadrique came to the edge of his side of the water, and listened to what Henestrosa had to say.

"Sir Master," said the courtier, "when the late king, Don Alfonso, your father, regulated your household when you were young, he gave you knights and esquires for your vassals. I was amongst the number, and many favours have I received from you. Thus, except in what relates to the duty I owe my Lord the King, God is my witness that there is no man to whom I consider myself more beholden than to you, and I would do anything to prove my gratitude, consistently with the loyalty due to the King your brother.

"You are in great danger.

"I adjure you in the presence of these knights, your companions, to follow my advice, so that in case you disregard it, no one may be able to say that I have contributed to your ruin. Henceforth, I stand acquitted towards you, for I have fulfilled the duty which belonged to one who has formerly been your vassal."

These mysterious words troubled the young master, and in anxiousness and wonder he replied :—

"Juan Fernandez, I have always accounted you a good knight, and whilst with me you ever served me loyally. But what is this counsel you would give me ? "

Then as though admitting the needlessness of his question, he continued :—

“Can I abandon the Queen, who has placed herself under my protection, Doña Juana, my brother Enrique’s wife, and so many noble knights and esquires who are in this city?”

“But for these, I would willingly treat, and as for you, Henestrosa, your duty is to represent to your lord how much it will aid his cause to receive the Queen and the nobles who surround her into favour, and to grant them his protection.”

“Sir Master,” replied Henestrosa, “I only do my duty. Take my word that if you do not at once implore the King’s mercy, you are in danger of death. I dare say no more, but I call all here present to bear witness to my words.”

Fadrique, now thoroughly alarmed, asked if it were certain that the King would forgive him.

Then Pedro, coming a little nearer to the water, cried in a loud voice:—

“Brother, Henestrosa is an honest man and counsels you well. Throw yourself on my mercy, and I will pardon you and all the knights on this island with you. But no delay! Come at once!”

Then Don Fadrique hesitated no longer, and crossing the river, sank on his knees before the King and kissed his hand.

From the walls of Toro, citizens and soldiers were gazing at the scene, and though they were unable to make out what was actually passing between the brothers, when they saw Fadrique kneel and kiss the King’s hand, a cry of “treason” and “betrayal” went up amongst them.

And in all the streets, from mouth to mouth there passed the cry, " Betrayed ! Betrayed ! The Master deserts us ! "

We may well imagine there was a quaking of limbs and fluttering of hearts among the men responsible for the custody of Toro. Treachery leapt from eye to eye. No man could trust his neighbour an instant. The siege was practically over.

Into the castle of the town ran Maria, the Condessa de Trastamara, and several timorous nobles.

All attempt at discipline was gone ; orders were no longer given ; the whole city trembled under the brooding vengeance of the King who was advancing on them ; their King whom they had betrayed. Some sought to end their despair and wretchedness in flight, but the royal troops were drawn round the city in an inflexible and unbreakable cordon. And so night crept upon a city of despair, cast into utter torpor of irresolution and fear. Every careless shout of the King's soldiers that came to the beleaguered from across the water seemed to them a cry of vengeance. So they waited in silence for death to come to them, waited for it to be borne to them in the pitiless eyes of Pedro, and on the swords of his soldiers.

In the darkness, the royal troops were ferried across the river in boats, and when they were landed, their officers led them silently to the Puerta de Santa Catalina, where Triguero, the merchant, stood prepared to pay the price asked for his life.

At the time appointed, Triguero was at his post, and soon the gates fell back to receive the King

and his men, while the people slept in restless insecurity.

There was little struggle, and the soldiers of Don Pedro took possession of the town easily enough.

Only those in the castle had occasion for a little hope behind the crumbling security of its walls. In the morning, no other thought but wonder as to when the King's vengeance would begin animated the remnant of the Leaguers.

They would have gone to him to sue for pardon, as extravagantly, as humbly as he could have desired, but they had little hope of pardon. No one cared to face the young King. The assumption to be gathered from Ayala's narrative is that there was nothing unusual in the fate awaiting the townspeople.

Executions were plainly expected, and executions certainly took place. To attribute them to Pedro's vile and unnatural instincts is not fair. Such a standard of justice as they represented did not shock public opinion in any marked degree. People were full of cruelty then as now, only in those days they did not demand a veil of refinement between their thoughts and their acts.

One knight, however, was found amongst the garrison daring enough to face the King.

Martin Abarca, a gentleman of Navarre, who had gone to seek his fortune and experience among the Castilians, holding by the hand a little boy of twelve years, made his way to Don Pedro. The child was a brother of the King, and natural son of Alfonso XI. by Eleonor de Guzman. Arrived in the royal presence,

the knight, hoping that the sight of the child might soften the King's heart, said :—

“ Sire, I pray you to pardon me ! I throw myself at your feet, and restore to you your brother, Don Juan ! ”

“ Martin Abarca,” answered Don Pedro, “ I forgive my brother Juan, but for you there is no pardon.”

Then, coming boldly to the king's very side, and still holding Don Juan's hand in his own, he prostrated himself with humility and dignity before him.

“ Do then with me as you will,” said he.

The King, touched by the calmness and despairing courage of the man, granted him his life, to the satisfaction of all the knights and nobles around.

But as yet Maria, Pedro's mother, had given her son no sign, and to her word was, therefore, sent that the King sought her in audience. Fearful of her life, she demanded a safe-conduct for herself and her knights, we may think perhaps especially for one knight, her own knight, Martin Telho.

But Pedro was in no mood for argument.

“ Let her come at once,” he cried, “ I know what I have to do.” “ They hesitated to obey,” says Mérimée. And indeed it is small wonder if they did.

But at length they came—Maria, the Condessa de Trastamara, Estebañez Carpentero, Gonzalez de Castañeda, Tellez Giron, and Martin Telho. With them they bore a letter of pardon which had been granted to Castañeda a little while before. He held it tremblingly in his fingers : although it had been a pardon for Castañeda only, it was the single hope

that stood between death and the little party. But it was lapsed and almost certainly useless ; for it bore a date which had gone by.

Huddling together and afraid, this little procession made its way from the castle through a line of soldiers over the drawbridge to the King's presence.

In the front were Castañeda and Carpentero, with Queen Maria between them. Telho and Giron followed closely behind.

The paper bearing the royal pardon was borne in the outstretched hand of Castañeda like a flag of truce.

When they had crossed the bridge, they saw no sign of Don Pedro, but instead, a row of fierce and jeering faces and a hedge of drawn swords confronted them.

"The King's pardon ! We have the King's pardon !" Estebañez's arm was rather shaky. Maria stretched out a hand behind her nervously to seek that of her lover. The crowd hooted and yelled, but still the King did not appear.

And then doubt and fear were finally put to rest when an esquire came and broke through the press of men, and, with a blow at Carpentero's head, laid him at the queen's feet.¹ Then all around poignards were drawn from their sheaths, and, in a very fury of loyalty, all the knights closed round the four men, and stabbed them to death, pushing each other aside in their eagerness to strike a blow.

The two women, who were covered with blood, shrieked and fainted away.

When Maria recovered consciousness again, it was

¹ Ayala, 1356, Cap. II.

to find facing her the nude, mutilated, and dishonoured body of her lover, lying exposed before her eyes. Here we see plainly the work of Pedro, who, since he could not directly punish his own mother, determined to punish her by outraging and dishonouring her lover. The incident fits in well with his eastern character, his love of the bizarre, the grim, the sarcastic.

Thus, blood-stained, half-frenzied, with Telho's hacked and bleeding corpse before her eyes, she turned on her son, and cursed him with fury and madness, accusing him of having vilely and abominably dishonoured her for ever.

Pedro heard her in silence, and, when her fury had somewhat exhausted her strength, ordered her to be led away with the Condessa de Trastamara.

CHAPTER XV

OUR BROTHER OF ARAGON

THE Toro executions provided Castile with something more like peace than it had known for several years. The League ceased to exist. Enrique, the arch-plotter, despaired of his fortunes at home, and set out to gain experience in arms as the captain of a Free Company in France. Don Tello sued for mercy. Don Fadrique was quiet. It really looked as though things might run smoothly and happily without the assistance of executions for a little while.

Pedro turned once again from war to love, and went back to his beloved Andalusia, his beloved Alcazar in Seville, and his still beloved Maria. Maria had now given the King two daughters, to whom, we know, he was very much attached. It is amusing to picture him enjoying a little calm family life in the scented gardens and picturesque setting of his southern capital.

It was in times like these that he gave scope to his fancies and tastes for the decoration and restoration of the palace. In times such as this that he acted as a patron of the arts. It is difficult, perhaps, to imagine him in this light. At the most, he was, perhaps, complacently contemptuous of such things, though

Rabbi Don Sem Tob dedicated his poems to the King. The case of this Jewish-Arabian versifier is another instance of Pedro's affection and intimacy with the Jews. Any love, however, which Don Pedro did have for the arts was always completely subservient to his greed and ambition. In 1357 he stripped the cathedral and the tombs of his ancestors of many beautiful ornaments to provide money for his wants. Yet we must remember that the restoration and magnificent decoration of the Alcazar was his work and delight.

Another man of this age, who was a poet, was Pedro Lopez de Ayala, the chronicler. His "*Rimado de Palacio*," or Palace Rhymes, is a very severe and courtly exercise in rather ponderous verse.

Thus, amid the pleasures of peace, Pedro forgot for a little while his troublesome nobles, his plotting treacherous *Ricos Hombres*, his anger, and his sword. He walked with Maria in the palace gardens among the orange and lemon and cypress trees, and varied, no doubt, the calm happiness of his family life with little exercises of gallantry. A disturbing and alarming circumstance occurred about this time in the nature of a violent earthquake which toppled down from the Cathedral of Seville the two large gilded balls which ornamented its dome. These "iron apples," as Mariana calls them, fell at Pedro's own feet. In many other parts of Spain, and in Madrid especially, this disturbance of the earth made itself most violently felt. A number of folk at the time considered it as a warning or dispensation of Providence for Pedro's treatment of the Pope and his generally wicked life.

But neither earthquakes, nor the fact of gilded domes tumbling at his feet were likely to keep the fierce and energetic spirit of Pedro in abeyance for any length of time. Having reduced the opposition of his nobles and scattered or removed by death the most prominent of his enemies, there remained few objectives at home for his warlike attentions.

But it may be remembered how badly he had been treated by the King of Aragon, when he sent him a letter of complaint and entreaty, to seek his aid for the re-establishment of authority.

Aragon, on his side, perceived with but little pleasure how powerful and well-known his half-brothers, the Infantes, had become of late through their connection with Castile.

From insignificant princes, they had grown into factious, experienced warriors, with many a battle and joust to their account. Not only in these things had their strength grown: their assistance to Don Pedro had not been given without some recompense, and their benefit from the bargain in castles, men, and money was as unpleasant and humiliating to Pedro IV. of Aragon as it was gratifying to the Infantes themselves. And again, in part of Pedro's plaint, it was alleged that many of his recalcitrant and offending nobles, who should have been duly executed, were now sharpening their swords and laughing at him in an Aragonese asylum.

And further—and hardly to be borne, this!—his brother of Aragon had given to a rebel Castilian knight the commandery of Alcaniz.



DOÑA ELVIRA AYALA

And further, divers reports of secret intrigues between His Majesty of Aragon and the Leaguers.

And further, piracy.

And lastly (though no official mention was made of it) the wounded dignity and pride of the Castilian Majesty, and a burning energy seeking an immediate outlet.

One day Pedro, weary perhaps a little of Maria and the children, and tired of his perfumed gardens, and in despair of finding someone to quarrel with, went a-fishing.

He stepped on a boat at Seville, and sailed down the Guadalquivir with the intention of taking part in the tunny fishing which was carried on off the Andalusian shore near San Lucar. When, behold, there came sailing up the bay a squadron of galleys. These vessels, commanded by Francisco Perellos, were in the pay of the King of France, who, by arrangement with the King of Aragon, had ordered them to cruise along the coast and capture any English trading vessels which they might encounter. Perellos also considered it a part of his duty to capture any vessel of any nationality whatsoever, provided the affair seemed not too likely to lead him into trouble, for he was, like most others of his kind in these days, only a sort of superior pirate.¹

Don Pedro and his friends perceived that the Catalan ships were giving chase to three other vessels, barks laden with oil, which were flying the Castilian flag.

¹ Patriotism seems to demand this tit-for-tat. Our Drake is always dubbed "pirate" by Spanish historians.

Don Pedro sent a message to the Aragonese Admiral, warning him to leave the barks alone. But Perellos replied that the vessels contained merchandise from Genoa, a republic with which Aragon was at war—at any rate for the moment—that his duty was to the King of Aragon, not to the King of Castile, and that he would do as he pleased.

Don Pedro, who was for the moment without a vessel of war, had tamely to submit to this insult, and though he threatened reprisals on all his Catalan subjects in Seville, Perellos made his capture, and sailed away.

The King of Castile had now found a subject of quarrel. He was very angry, and, returning immediately to Seville, cast all his Catalan subjects into chains, sequestered the property of all Aragonese merchants, and ransacked and sold such places and property as seemed fit to his offended humour.

Seven galleys were promptly put into commission, and Pedro, joined by all the young and ardent knights of Seville, set out in immediate pursuit of the temerarious Francisco. This was, according to Zuñiga,¹ the first occasion on which a king of Castile had ever put to sea in person against his enemies.

Seville had had, since the time of Alfonso the Wise, its College of Admiralty, where there was every convenience for the fitting out of naval expeditions, and every opportunity for instructing those of the young nobles who cared for navigation and naval duties. In addition to this, certain forests were set apart for the express use of the country's shipbuilders, and this

¹ Quoted in Mérimée.

constant supply of timber enabled Castile to be something of a power in her own seas.

After a sail of some days, it became evident that it would be impossible to overtake the Catalan ships.

Pedro learnt from some fishermen, that their fleet had passed them several days before, *en route* for France. So, much annoyed and irritated, he had to return to his capital once more.

He left some of his vessels to go and attack the Balearic coasts, and to do any harm in their power to Aragonese shipping.

Further, he sent ambassadors to Barcelona with a litany of complaints and imperative demands.

He asked that Francisco should be delivered up to the King of Castile for chastisement. His men were also to be punished.

The commanders of Alcaniz and Montalvan were to be deposed, and all Castilian refugees extradited at once.

It was a comprehensive and vigorous note, and Pedro IV. sought time in which to answer it. He parleyed and was moderate ; offering to meet Pedro's requests in any directions, but maintaining, that as Perellos was in his own vessel the trial of him was a matter for Aragon rather than Castile. He promised to enquire into his case, and added that, if Perellos were guilty, he should be duly made to suffer the penalty of his crimes.

Don Pedro of Castile was not satisfied. Probably he wanted war at any price, and no vague promises were enough to soothe that extremely tender self-

love of his, so sadly wounded in the roads of San Lucar.

So he cast down the challenge to his brother of Aragon, telling him to seek another friend; for he ceased to be his. His messenger, Gil Velasquez, had formally declared war, and "defied" him in his master's name.

Hostilities had broken out before Pedro IV. received this intimation. Bands of soldiers were quickly called together by the nobles of Castile who were anxious to help their angry king in the outcome of this sudden and desperate choler of his. Raids and skirmishes took place immediately on the frontiers. Diego de Padilla, with the knights of the Order of Calatrava, entered the kingdom of Valencia, and laid waste those towns and places on the furthest side of the border. Gutier Fernandez marched upon Daroca and Calatayud, where he experienced but little success, and in one encounter suffered defeat from the hands of the Conde de Luna.

Pedro of Aragon, somewhat taken by surprise at thus having war forced upon him by his fiery brother-monarch, could do but little at first except defend such of his towns as possessed garrisons, and fortify or strengthen those which had nothing or little in the way of mural protection around them.

A walled town well-fortified was, of course, in the Middle Ages, almost secure against attacks, for the weapons of the times were rarely of a character to be able forcibly to reduce a besieged place. So generally was this recognised, that in many sieges the invest-

ment, apart from occasional jousts and combats outside the walls to relieve everybody's feelings, was often a very dull and unexciting affair.

At this time, France was at war with England, and King John was gathering together that great army of his which was to fare so disastrously at Poitiers. Don Enrique de Trastamara, who had offered his services to the Fleur de Lys, was preparing to join the French Army, when proposals came to him from Pedro of Aragon, which made him change his plans. The offer of the command of all the disaffected Castilians and an alliance with the King of Aragon pleased him well enough to permit him to resign his captaincy of a Free Company, for the opportunity of fighting in his own land.

A treaty—the treaty of Pina—was drawn up between the Castilian prince and the King, and it was agreed that Henry should do homage to Pedro, and in return should be given many castles, some money, and some soldiers. Also it was provided that Pedro IV. was never to make peace with Pedro I. of Castile, without Enrique's consent, and further—whether with or without the connivance of Fadrique it is not known—it was agreed that, should the latter enter the services of Aragon, he was to receive in return investiture of all the lands belonging to the order of Santiago, which were dependent upon the Aragonese Crown. Mérimée presumes that the inclusion of this clause implies secret correspondence between the bastard princes and fresh treason on the part of the Master of Santiago against his brother and king.

Not to be outdone in traitorous and unpatriotic sentiments by the Castilian princes, the Infante Don Fernando of Aragon had himself denaturalised, a political act quite recognised in the systems of Spain. He renounced his homage to Pedro IV., and transferred it to Pedro I. The move did not strengthen the Castilian king's position as much as he had imagined. Don Fernando found himself with little influence among his own people, whom his constant absences and dealings with Castile had obviously displeased. His town of Alicante repudiated his authority, and returned in its allegiance to the Aragonese monarch.

The war dragged along apathetically after the first few furious assaults and raids, which Pedro organised to dull the sharpness of his anger. The year turned into the yellow, and then into the grey and white, and in the January of 1357 the King lost his mother, who died in Portugal.

It is related of her that she died despised and condemned of all, for the death of her lover, Telho, had cast her into a habit of undignified and illicit amours, in whose fervour she sought to lose the memory of her Portuguese knight.¹ Her conduct was very distasteful to the male members of her house, for a woman's chastity and honour were points of great importance among the noble mediæval houses. Of her end it is said that she was poisoned—according to some, by the order of her father, the King of Portugal; according to others, by the hands of her son.

Indeed, it occurs to one, that there were few things

¹ Mérimée.

one might not expect of one's relatives in these times.

Of the fact that she died at Don Pedro's hands there is no evidence and small probability. Ayala does not give it so—he says that it was rumoured, that her father, Don Alfonso, caused "*hierbas*" to be administered to her that she might die—and Pedro was too much occupied with other things at the time to turn his mind towards a middle-aged woman who had happened to bear him, but who was of no political power or influence.

To the seat of war there now came Cardinal Guillen, the ambassador of His Holiness, charged with the task of bringing to their senses these two young kings of Spain. A fortnight's truce was obtained as the first outcome of his diplomacy, but, at the end of it, Pedro the Cruel, having heard of an opportunity to surprise an Aragonese town, marched on it, and with the assistance of Don Fadrique took it. The inhabitants were expelled, and the land and dwellings made over to the victorious Castilians in the traditional fashion for cultivation, occupation, and defence.

At the capture of the castle of Los Fayos by Pedro, his soldiers found Martin Abarca, the knight whose life the King had spared at the occupation of Toro. Abarca, who was unlucky to be thus twice found in arms against his sovereign, was this time executed.

The success of the Castilian arms drew many warriors, adventurers, and stay-at-homes into the King's service. Don Tello arrived from Biscay. Many captains and soldiers of Free Companies who had experienced

ill-fortune in France offered themselves to the winning side in Spain. The Sire d'Albret, a vassal of Edward III. is mentioned among these. In order to have a chance of attacking his own private foe, the Comte de Foix, he enlisted under Pedro.

At Borja a pitched battle, with each army under the command of its own king, was on the point of being fought, but caution and the disposition to regard war more as an opportunity of plunder than anything else kept the rival hosts from meeting.

The papal legate then took command of the situation and renewed his services in the cause of peace.

On the 18th of March, 1357, under an elm outside the gates of Tuleda in Navarre, a conference took place.

The result was embodied in a temporary truce, in which, though actual hostilities were suspended, there were too many opposing interests for it to be a basis of any secure and lasting quiet.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ENCHANTED GARDEN

IN this period of tumult and war, Don Pedro found time to fall in love again.

There are two narratives of the episode, and of these, one contains so strange and charming a fancy that it makes one wonder how such a delicate tale came to be interwoven with the brutalities of the times.

The two ways of telling the story of Aldonza Coronel are the legendary and the historic, but as the legendary is so much more beautiful than the latter, it shall have precedence of narration if not of belief.

In this story, the legend gathers into its service flowers, shrubs, trees, and earth with a pretty grace and fancy.

What do you think of a lady, of course of a beauty highly remarkable, and of a virtue only less so, who, flying from the importunities of a too ardent lover, orders a little grave to be made for her in the garden. Who lies there with perfect confidence that the roses, the lilies, and the myrtles of her garden will lend their aid to the discomforting of too-impetuous Cupid ; Cupid that goes tramping over flower beds, and scatters the blossoms of the orange trees as he passes.

“ Where is she ? ” the lover cries, in his great

desire ; but naturally not a flower in all the moon-lit garden tells him. A very old yew tree, a great great grand-parent of perhaps one thousand years, folds its grave, dark wings closely round itself and smiles inscrutably. A funeral cypress lets its long, mournful hair wave and shiver in the breeze, but it is as silent as the tomb over which its melancholy shadow is cast.

“ Where is she,” asks the lover, but in this enchanted garden nothing answers him.

And in the new-cast earth the lady lies, and the mould and the worms are surprised at seeing so warm and exquisite a corpse, and over the top of the grave rose stretches hand to rose, and slender lilies lean protectingly and a hundred little leaves immolate themselves in a suicidal shudder of autumn over the lady and—nothing is to be seen.

Need one say that the lover who follows thus sacrilegiously his beloved into the peace and sanctity of a convent garden is Don Pedro ? And the lady was called Aldonza.

Frowning upon his suit and spurning his protestations, she had sought asylum and peace in the convent of Santa Clara, where, as we have seen, the roses and the lilies of the garden conspired to keep her as chaste as the purest convent blossom of them all.

But Don Pedro was as relentless in love as in war. He felt that there was some mystery about the garden. He knew Aldonza was there, though how she had disappeared he could not explain to himself. The

convent was placed under surveillance, and when he had learnt that the lady was indeed still there, he determined to make a second attack.

On this occasion, it seems that Aldonza was caught unawares, and had no time to run out into the convent garden and hide in the earth and call upon the flowers to cover her.

Hearing that Pedro was in the place, she seized a vessel of burning oil and threw its contents over her face and neck, and, when the King saw her, she was all covered with fearful burns and terrible scalds. And she told him that she was tainted with leprosy, and, seeing how awful she looked, he went away.

Various it is told by other people, and related in Seville as a common legend, that the King had driven Aldonza or Maria—the names have been confused—from her convent into the suburb of Triana.

And then, flying in great haste and fear from the royal importunities, she entered a house where a Gitana was frying fritters in a pan. Driven to despair of ever being able to escape Pedro by ordinary means she flung the boiling fat in the pan over her face.

Zuñiga,¹ in the "Annals of Seville," says that on her miraculously-preserved body there may still be seen the traces of these self-inflicted burns.

The legendary and poetic narrative seems, somehow, to have lost its way a little among the intricacies and delicacies of Pedro's amours. For, although I have called her Aldonza in telling the story of the

¹ Quoted in Mérimée.

enchanted garden, the legend speaks of her as *Maria*, the younger daughter of the Coronel family.

Maria's story was, however, quite different.

She was the wife of Don Juan de la Cerda, a rebel against Don Pedro. When her husband was taken for the second time in arms against the King, he was condemned to death. To supplicate Don Pedro for mercy on behalf of her husband, came Maria Coronel, a lady, says the chronicle, as celebrated for her virtue as for her rare beauty.

The King, moved by her tears and entreaties, granted her her request, but the order of execution had gone on several days in advance from the King's camp to Seville, and Maria arrived with the royal pardon too late to save her husband's life.

Doña Maria, who was only twenty, took the veil in the convent of Santa Clara, where she was joined later by her sister, Aldonza.

Now the legendary account of Aldonza Coronel differs widely from the historical, for, whereas in the one, Aldonza under the name of Maria is presented as shrinking all the while from the King's passion and finally disgusting him, in actual fact she became his mistress after a somewhat persistent wooing, and had a suite of apartments and servants set apart for her. "Voluntarily she quitted the nunnery," where she was staying with her sister Maria, and accepted apartments in the Torre del Oro, situated on the banks of the Guadalquivir. There is no doubt of this, for Ayala is quite circumstantial in the matter, which had several consequences as we shall see.

With all the secrecy and perfumed magnificence of an Eastern Sultana, Aldonza reigned over Seville during the absences of the King. Her word was, by his command, to stand for his own when he was away, and the Mayor of the city was bidden to observe her smallest behests. Maria de Padilla, although in temporary disfavour, was still living in the Alcazar, where she had to accept this latest phase of Pedro's conduct with what good grace she could muster.

Thus, there were two Sultanas, two favourites in the Andalusian capital, each with her train of courtiers, knights and attendants, and each no doubt plotting and desiring the destruction of the other. So engaged, at any rate, was, we know, the mistress more lately come into her position, and though Maria was a good, kind, tender-hearted woman, she can hardly have regarded with calmness the presence of Aldonza and her train of courtiers.

Don Pedro, who was quite an Oriental in these matters, made no attempt to disguise the state of affairs. The dual households pleased his sense of importance, and probably the only thing that troubled him was the expense. He was often, we know, hard put to it for money, though he ended by becoming one of the very richest monarchs of his own time.

This state of things lasted some little while, and every day it looked as though the reign of the Padillas was drawing to a close to make way for that of Doña Aldonza and her friends.

The King often left Seville for days at a time on hunting expeditions, and on one of these occasions

Juan de Henestrosa returned to the city from a political mission to the King of Portugal. With him, he brought a promise of aid from Alfonso IV. against Aragon.

Pedro, who was in the neighbourhood of Carmona, sent for Doña Aldonza, and this action on the return of Henestrosa was thought by the courtiers of the Coronel faction to indicate the final downfall of the rival party.

Aldonza's friends became daring, and proceeded to act for themselves. Henestrosa was thrown into prison at the instigation of the governor of the Torre del Oro and the beautiful Aldonza herself.

On the same day, Diego de Padilla shared a similar fate. The Padillas, who had made few friends during their period of favour with the King, now discovered that there were plenty of enemies ready to assist at, and rejoice over their downfall. But the instigators of this ill-timed intrigue had counted without Maria de Padilla herself.

Her influence over Don Pedro was far from being entirely gone. Perhaps the fulness of her sensual attraction over him had rather waned, but he trusted in her still, respected her, and believed in her.

He was enormously and feverishly angry at this assumption of authority by Aldonza Coronel and her party. He secretly wrote to Maria bidding her be sure that he no longer cared for her rival.

Then he returned in haste to Seville, had the imprisoned nobles released at once, and proceeded to salve their wounded dignity by fresh honours and favours.

He went back to Maria and left Doña Aldonza at Carmona without a word of explanation, advice, direction, or reproach. Henceforth he simply ignored her existence, ignored her as a master might ignore the impertinent request of a slave on whom he had smiled for a moment.

When she got tired of waiting for messages from Pedro that never came, she began to perceive into what a plight she had adventured. The contemptuous silence oppressed her with shame. Her little flutter of glory was to be paid for at a large price.

When all hope vanished, she stole back quietly to Seville, and entered again the convent of Santa Clara, "where it is said she spent the remainder of her life in penitence."

CHAPTER XVII

THE MURDER OF THE MASTER

AND now we come to one of the darkest and most evil pictures in this gallery of Peter of Castile. Peter murdered his brother Fadrique, and the best way to tell the story of the deed is, I think, to follow the calm, passionless, incisive style of Ayala as closely as may be. There is something very vivid in his simple account.

In narrations of action like this, Ayala shines over his countryman Mariana, the acknowledged stylist and *littérateur*: so nearly does the old chronicler come to the limpidity and nudity of high, self-conscious art.

We have seen a kind of unstable peace agreed on between Aragon and Castile, but war was still smouldering on the frontiers, even if it did not break out into battles and sieges.

Pedro, who saw in the struggle an opportunity of self-aggrandisement, accepted the offices of the papal legate with a bad grace, and, indeed, incurred a little later a sentence of excommunication and interdict from the annoyed and indignant Cardinal.

And about this time we find once again that adventurous knight Pero Carillo playing a principal

part in events. We have seen him in that romantic journey through Spain in the early day of Don Pedro's reign, when Enrique was compelled to fly with his newly-married wife into the Asturias. We have watched him heading deputations and fighting tournaments, and behold ! here he is again devising another romantic adventure quite after his own heart.

Doña Juana de Trastamara, who was one day to be Queen of Castile, served that adventurous apprenticeship which seems to have been so necessary an education for princes and princesses in those days.

At this time, she was a political prisoner, a hostage in Castile, and her husband the Conde was anxious to rescue her. To this end, the wily and faithful Pero Carillo arranged that reports should reach Don Pedro's ears to the effect that De Trastamara was in reality anxious for a reconciliation with his brother. He then went in person, and declared to the King how dissatisfied he was with his present vassalage, and how sorry he was to have ever acted in opposition to Pedro. He implored his monarch's mercy, and sought nothing better than an opportunity to return to his proper allegiance. He promised to serve Don Pedro faithfully and loyally, if he would but accept his homage.

Pero deceived the King, and was taken into favour and settled at Taneriz with a promise of promotion and authority to raise a troop of horse, which he did to use against the King and effect the speedy rescue of Doña Juana, whom, for the second time in her life,

he piloted in a perilous journey through Castile. We may imagine Don Pedro's anger when he learnt of the trick, and of the arrival of his hostage in Aragon.

He was very angry. That martinet pride and colossal self-esteem of his suffered at the success of the ruse.

He surrounded his brothers and lieutenants with spies, and though apparently on good terms with Tello and Fadrique, it would seem that he was secretly plotting their death. Enrique, who, for almost the whole term of his brother's reign had maintained towards him an attitude of open and honest hostility, the King had no reason to treat other than as a foe. But he found, that, while Fadrique was seemingly interested in the success of the Castilian arms, he was quietly engaged in secret correspondence with his brother, the Conde and the King of Aragon. Mérimée includes in his history a passport given by the King of Aragon at this time to one Gonzalo Mexia as envoy from the Conde de Trastamara to Don Fadrique.

Pedro, who had come to the conclusion that their death alone would be sufficient to rid him of the plotting and underhand schemes of his brothers, took at this time into his counsel Don Juan, Infante of Aragon, "a weak and evil prince."

In the privacy of his own cabinet, Don Pedro discussed with the Aragonese Prince and Sarmiento, the Adelantado of Castile, the fate of Fadrique.

It was the early morning.

The King offered his two conspirators a crucifix and the gospels, and asked them to swear that they

would hold secret all the conversation which should pass between them.

Then the King said :—

“Cousin, you know and I also that Don Fadrique, my brother, the Master of Santiago, bears no more goodwill towards you than you do towards him. I have proof that he has betrayed me, and to-day I mean to kill him. As soon as Fadrique is dead, I shall set off for Biscay, where I propose to treat Don Tello in a similar manner. I shall then give you his lands in Biscay, and those also of Lara, for, as you are married to Doña Isabel, daughter of Don Juan Nuñez de Lara, those noble domains naturally revert to you.”

The young Infante did not demur to this projected piece of royal justice, but replied readily in similar strain :—

“Sire, I feel grateful for your confidence in thus exposing to me your secret designs. It is true that I hate the Master of Santiago and his brothers. They also detest me on account of the love I bear to you. I am therefore pleased to hear that you have resolved to rid yourself of the Master. If you desire it, I will myself slay him.”

“Cousin,” answered the King, “I thank you, and pray you to do as you say.”

Perez Sarmiento, the third party present at this scene, may perhaps have had either a conscience or a sense of humour, for, finding the scene not to his liking, he ventured a reproof towards the Infante—a reproof in which one is able to detect a touch of sarcasm.

“You may rejoice, my lord,” he said to the Infante,

“ that his Grace the King is about to perform an act of justice ; but do you think he has not *ballesteros* sufficient to dispatch the Master ? ”

“ Now it was Tuesday, the 29th day of May,” says Ayala, “ and the King was in Seville, in his Alcazar, playing draughts. Just outside the city’s gates a certain monk had, we learn, given the Master a mysterious warning of a great danger that was threatening him, a message that may have come from the friendly Sarmiento, or from some other who suspected evil things. The Master, at any rate, paid no regard to the monk’s words, but went forthwith to seek his brother the King, accompanied by his knights and the gentlemen of his train.

“ As soon as he came to the presence of the King, he kissed his hand, as did likewise many of the knights who accompanied him. Don Pedro received him with a show of goodwill, asking him from whence he came that day, and if he had good lodgings. The Master replied that he had set out that day from Cantillana, which is five leagues from Seville, and for his lodgings, he knew not of them yet, but was full sure they would be good. The King bade him go and look to his lodging and then return to him ; and the King said this because many companies had come into the Alcazar with the Master.”

Fadrique then left his brother and went into the royal nursery, where he found Maria de Padilla and her children. And he talked and played with his little nieces in this part of the Alcazar which was called the Caracol.

Now Maria knew all that was planned, and because she was a good woman with a kind and tender heart, she assumed a mournful and alarming expression, that the Master might read in her eyes the kindly treason her lips dared not frame. "For the death decreed against the Master lay heavy on her."

Don Fadrique then left his sister-in-law and his nieces, and went down into the courtyard of the palace, where he had left his mules and the greater portion of his retinue. But, on coming to the place where he had left them, he found them all gone, for the King had given orders to his porters for everyone to leave the courtyard, and all the beasts had been turned out, and all the knights, that nothing might interfere with the scheme in hand. When the Master could not find his mules, he was at a loss whether he should go back to the King or not. One of his knights, Suer Gutierrez de Navales, an Austrian, perceived that some danger was about, for he noticed a commotion in the Alcazar, and he said to his master: "My lord, the postern of the courtyard stands open; go out and you shall not lack mules." And this he repeated many times, for he hoped that if the Master should come into the midst of his followers, they would be able to save him.

Even then the unsuspecting Fadrique was unaware of his danger, and it was not until there came to him two messengers from the King, two brothers of the name of De Tovar, that he perceived the trap into which he had fallen. In dread, and with much misgiving, he made his way back to Don Pedro.

With him, for the first part of the way, there came a few of his knights, but these grew gradually less, as the porters at the various doors barred their way.

When the Master came to the place where the King was, none was allowed to enter save only the Master, Don Fadrique, and the Master of Calatrava, Don Diego Garcia (who had that day accompanied Don Fadrique, the Master of Santiago, and knew nothing of all this) and two other knights. The King was in a hall called "Del Fierro" with the door closed. And when the Masters of Santiago and Calatrava came to the door of the hall where the King was, it was not opened to them, and they stood at the door. And Pedro Lopez de Padilla, the King's *ballestero mayor*, was outside with the Masters, and thereupon a wicket opened in the hall where the King was, and the King said to Pedro Lopez de Padilla :—

"Pedro Lopez, seize the Master ;" and he replied, "Which of them ?"

And the King said : "The Master of Santiago." Then Pedro Lopez de Padilla laid hold of the Master Don Fadrique, and said, "I arrest you"; and the Master stood silent, full of dread, and the King said to some *ballesteros* who stood by : "*Ballesteros*, kill the Master of Santiago." But even so, the *ballesteros* durst not do it. Then one of the King's bedchamber, a man named Ruy Gonzalez de Atienza, who was in the secret, cried aloud to the *ballesteros* :—

"Traitors ! What are you about ? Did you not hear the King command you to kill the Master ?"

Then the *ballesteros*, seeing it was indeed the

King's order, raised their maces to strike the Master, Don Fadrique, who, when he saw this, disengaged himself from the grasp of Pedro Lopez de Padilla and sprang into the courtyard. He seized his sword but could not draw it, for it was slung round his neck under the tabard which he wore, and when he would have drawn it, the hilt caught in the strap, and he could not get it free. The *ballesteros* pursued him to wound him with their maces, but they could not succeed, for he eluded them and fled from side to side in the courtyard.

Then Nuño Ferrandez de Roa, who pursued him more closely than the rest, came up with him and dealt him a blow on the head with his mace, so that he fell to the ground, and thereupon all the other macemen came up and wounded him.

As soon as the King saw the Master lying on the ground, he went through the palace in the hope of finding some others of his followers whom he might put to death. But he found none except one knight. For the rest had hidden themselves or gone. This unfortunate was Sancho Ruiz de Villegas, surnamed Sancho Portin, the Master's chief equerry. The King found him in the Caracol or quarters where Maria and the King's daughters dwelt. When the King entered the room, Sancho took Doña Beatrice, the King's daughter, in his arms, as though to ward off the King's ire, for he hoped to escape death through her. But Don Pedro ordered his daughter to be torn from the man, and stabbed him himself with a dagger which he wore in his belt.

De Tovar, the knight who had summoned the Master, then dispatched Villegas.

After this, the King returned to where the Master lay, and found that he was not yet dead, and the King took a dagger from his belt and gave it to a Moorish slave of his, to kill him with.

“When it was done, the King sat down to eat in the place where the Master lay dead, in a hall called the Azulejos, which is in the Alcazar.”

CHAPTER XVIII

PETER'S CRUELITIES

IT was about this time that his traditional epithet of "The Cruel" began to attach itself to Don Pedro. He conceived, we know, a wholesale scheme of executions, most of which were actually carried out. It was his retribution for that half-hearted revolt of his *Ricos Hombres*, which had yet, in a measure, succeeded in spite of its own feebleness. It was his answer to the plottings of his brothers; his reply to the Toro affair and the humiliation he had then received at the hands of his relatives. In the matter of deception, false dealing, cunning, and remorseless treachery, Pedro was no whit worse than any of his relatives or vassals. It was only in his cold-blooded ferocity, his fierce, unrestrained passions, and his intense, almost inhuman selfishness that he surpasses them. This young man of twenty-five had made himself in about eight years an absolute despot, and had impressed his character so strongly on his lords and people that there was no one to stand against him. He had become a symbol of supremacy, a religion, in fact, which weak and superstitious spirits (and such inevitably form a large proportion of any people) were rather glad than otherwise to accept.

Don Pedro, at this moment, stands for the extreme type of mediæval feudalism. He is a fierce and relentless example of its individualism reduced to an absurdity. He was beyond doubt a strong, callous man; it required but imagination for him to have been a great man.

He has been called the Nero of Castile, but the definition is, of course, superficial and crude. Pedro was a primitive, and Nero, I fancy, was an artist. The one wrought his monuments of cruelty in rude, straightforward, basaltic lines, while the other devised refined and delicate arabesques of vice to delight his tortured spirit. Nero's soul belonged to to-morrow; Pedro's to the stone-age.

No sooner was the inconvenient Fadrique dead than his brother and executioner set out to serve Don Tello in similar fashion. He called to his side the Infante Don Juan of Aragon, and told him in secret of his intention. He requested his company, saying that he wished to give him the kingdom of Biscay. The Infante kissed the King's hands, and believed in his promises.

Such haste did Don Pedro make in his journey, that he arrived at Don Tello's residence in seven days.

The prince, fortunately for himself, happened to be with a hunting party, but, as soon as he heard of the presence of the King in the neighbourhood, less unsuspecting than Fadrique, he made for the coast. There he got into a fishing boat, and set sail for St. John de Luz. Pedro pursued him, so determined was he in his intention, but he had to

put back on account of the weather, and Tello found safety in Bayonne.

Many other knights and squires were executed by the King's orders about this time. None of those who had served him in bad part during the time of his downfall at Toro were forgotten. *Ballesteros* with death-warrants went riding through the country, and the towns of Cordova, Salamanca, Mora, Toro, and Villajero were taxed of a bloody tribute.

Among those who were thus victims of the royal vengeance were Jufre Tenorio, the brother of Juan Tenorio, Alfonso Perez Fermosino, Don Lope Sanchez de Bendaña, who had insulted the King at the gates of Segura, Pero Cabrera and Alfonso de Gabete.

Now, Don Juan of Aragon had travelled into Biscay with the King in the firm belief and hope of seeing himself duly established as lord there by the power paramount of all Castile. Pedro had, indeed, taken away from the young prince, more or less with his consent, his Adelantadoship, but Don Juan was given to understand that the divestment of this honour was merely to pave the way for the reception of a higher one. He thought himself secure in the confidence and friendship of so powerful a protector, and began to dream kingdoms for himself. Don Pedro began operations in Biscay by gathering round him the principal citizens of the lordship. He gave them fair promises, and to these even added presents. He flattered, and exercised all the diplomacy which he possessed. He took up the attitude of one who was to deliver the Biscayans from an oppressive

and tyrannical lord, and suggested that the choice of a new one must of course rest with themselves. It was not for him, he implied, to tamper with the liberties of a free people.

These Basque mountaineers were a chivalrous, independent folk, whose confidence was easily gained, and the decorous and respectful attitude of the King towards their rights struck them as being in blessed contrast to the manner of Don Juan of Aragon, who was then wasting many words in claiming his new lordship from King and people.

Don Pedro bid him wait. It was, he said, a mere formality to invite the approval of the Biscayan Diet at Guernica, but one that it was perhaps politic not to neglect.

Don Juan's protestations only made him less popular with the people, and accelerated the action of the King.

Under an ancient tree, the deputies assembled, and listened to the crafty speech of Don Pedro. He told them how he respected their absolute independence and their ancient liberties, and then he put forward to them the claims of his candidate, Don Juan. In conclusion, he asked them whether or not they wished to accept Don Juan as their lord. The reply, which was of course no surprise to him, was a grave shock to the Infante.

"Never shall Biscay have any other lord than the King of Castile. We will have none other!" This cry went up on all sides, and the King turned to the Infante with an expression of surprise.

The Infante now perceived himself outwitted by his so-called friend, and broke into loud protests and reproaches. Pedro tried to appease him by promising to make a second effort. Such effort, of course, would, he knew quite well, only serve to make the position of a man, who was endeavouring to force himself upon the people, the more intolerable and dangerous. However, it was arranged that a second appeal to popular suffrage should be made at Bilbao, which was the proper capital of the province.

But the affair as a piece of diplomacy was nearly finished, and the crafty smile of Pedro was to turn again to his murderous frown.

Juan was now universally unpopular. There was no party for him in Biscay ; his death would be as pleasing to the people as it would be convenient to the King.

And so one fine morning in Bilbao, messengers went from the King to the Infante, saying that my lord would like to see my lord on an important business. A few squires accompanied Don Juan, but these were obliged by etiquette, supported no doubt by a janitor or two, to desert him on the threshold of the royal chamber.

Don Juan found the room full of Pedro's courtiers and ringing with laughter and noise, and on his entrance a little mob of knights jostled up against him and surrounded him as though in rough, good-humoured play. Some of them petted him rather impudently and affected a gross and presumptuous good-fellowship, and one plucked out the poignard

at his girdle, as though to examine it in sport and idle curiosity, for he wore no other weapon. And then a chamberlain seized him by the arm, and a *ballestero*, called Juan Diente, one of those who had killed Don Fadrique, dealt him a heavy blow on the head from behind. Don Juan, stunned by the blow, and surprised by this sudden treachery, broke loose from the press around him and staggered away towards the door, where Henestrosa met him with the point of his drawn sword. Then the mace-men swung their clubs in good earnest and felled him to the floor, and despatched him. The square in front of the palace was filled with people, whom interest in the election of the new lord had called together. A window was opened and, by Pedro's order, the dead body of the Infante was flung into the midst of the crowd. And someone cried out : " Biscayans, behold him who pretended to be your lord."

The crowd took the deed in good part, and thought that Don Pedro had only acted with justice in the matter, and with a desire to defend their liberties.

So Pedro's campaign of assassination went on, and his ill-fame among the nobles grew, while the people saw in him a defender of their rights.

There remained his aunt, Doña Leonor, to be punished ; and Juan de Henestrosa, a good man condemned to serve an evil master, was sent off in haste to Roa, a town which belonged to the Queen Dowager as a relic and result of the Toro days.

The good lady was living quietly enough with her

daughter-in-law, Doña Isabel de Lara, when Henestrosa came to demand in the King's name the keys of the town. The two women were made prisoners, and lodged in the castle of Castrojeriz. The King himself went to Burgos, a strong town of independent men, that Pedro thought perhaps to reduce to a gentler mood by making it, for a time, the centre of his acts of retribution and vengeance. Thither, then, came to him in the days following his arrival *ballesteros* from north and south, bearing on their saddle-bows the heads of those knights and squires whose death-warrants the King had issued at Seville before leaving for Biscay. By such means, Pedro sought to impress the burghers of Burgos.

Don Fernando of Aragon, and the Conde de Trastámara, when they heard the tidings of the death of their brothers, began reprisals at once, and made incursions into the plains of Castile. Pedro IV. himself seems to have been annoyed by a breach of etiquette on the part of his brother of Castile, who, in a complaint at the inroads of Enrique and Fernando, sent his message by a simple archer instead of with the retinue due to a monarch's dignity. The loss of his brother, Don Juan, does not seem to have troubled him at all.

Don Pedro of Castile was now determined to attack Aragon without delay, and, for this purpose, he deemed a naval campaign essential. He seems to have had some almost childish desire to shine as a great naval captain, as well as a redoubtable general on land. He therefore approached almost with frenzy the work

of building and equipping a great fleet. Every day he came personally into the arsenal on the banks of the Guadalquivir, and exhorted and encouraged the workmen. He spared no energy or money in the prosecution of this work, which was, perhaps, to him something in the way of a whim or fancy as well as an opportunity for revenge.

On land several skirmishes and small battles took place between his forces and those of the King of Aragon and the princes accepting his hospitality. Don Tello and Don Enrique were careful enough, however, to avoid falling into his clutches.

He had not forgotten those valuable hostages of his in Castrojeriz, those unfortunate women, Doña Leonor and Doña Isabel.

The former he had executed by some Moors, for it is said that no Castilian dared touch the sister of King Alfonso, and Doña Isabel he is thought to have had secretly poisoned.

Pedro was at this time in the full flush of all his cruelty and blood-lust. An absolute despot, fearing neither God nor man, it is now becoming difficult to portray him as a sane human being at all.

Here is an incident illustrative of Don Pedro's remarkable sense of justice which was so extremely personal as to be almost ridiculous. The incident is related on the authority of Alonso Martinez de Toledo, chaplain to Don Juan II. of Castile, the great-grandson of the subject of this memoir.¹

There was a castle called Cabezón, which belonged

¹ Quoted in Llaguno's notes to Ayala.

to the Conde de Trastamara. The castle was defended by ten esquires, ten bold, desperate men, who were exiles from Castile and under the proscription of Pedro. We do not know their names, but it is no matter. They were all lusty fellows of rascally character, who were in arms against all men, and to whom all women were simply a means of pleasure.

The little castle, which these desperadoes were defending, was perched right up on the very top of a hill. Its donjon looked down from a mass of vast, perpendicular rocks, and it was no easy matter at all to capture the place.

Besides the ten esquires, there were in the castle only the governor's wife and the governor's daughter, and possibly a servant or two. Before this castle there appeared one day, Don Pedro—in great haste to be admitted. He summoned the governor to surrender, but in vain. There was plenty of food inside and plenty of time in which to eat it, and the walls were very strong, and the knights unafraid of threats. But it was very dull there, they soon discovered ; very uninteresting and stupid indeed to be shut up in a castle with nothing to do. The custodians were all young men, and though they did not mind a good fight, the prospect of inaction and boredom terrified them. So they went in a deputation to the castellan and said that they must really have amusement. Insolently (we learn) they told him “ we must have women to keep us company in this eagle's nest. If we do not, we shall open the gates to the King of Castile.”

The governor could hardly miss the inference, and thus found himself put to choose between his domestic and his military honour.

It seems that the castellan of Cabezon was a knight of the time of chivalry more than he was a husband or a father, and the next thing we see is the garrison swearing to stand by the castle and its Governor till death.

But two of the knights, less wicked than their companions, or, more probably, dissatisfied with their share in the ladies' favours, made their escape from the castle and came to Don Pedro.

To him they related the whole story. Pedro at once became indignant and flew into a rage. He sent to the castellan and asked him to allow him to execute justice upon the custodians of the place. He made this proposition: that in exchange for the men who had so sourly served him and his honour, an equal number of his own knights should go into Cabezon and hold it against everyone, his royal self included. These knights, said Pedro, would be ready to swear to defend the place to the very last against all comers whomsoever they might be. They would, if necessary, die at their posts with the governor. The proposal was accepted, and the traitorous garrison were led forth to be quartered and cast into the flames.

Meanwhile the great preparations and immense activity at Seville have resulted in the mobilisation and equipment of a most formidable fleet. There were ready for action twenty-eight galleys, two

galleasses or smaller galleys, and four ships called *leños*, besides eighty merchantmen, which had been quickly turned into men-of-war. To this tremendous assembly of vessels must be added three more galleys, which Pedro had persuaded the King of Granada to supply and man, and yet another ten galleys and one galleass, which he had wrung from his not-too-enthusiastic ally, the King of Portugal. For his own use and command, Pedro had equipped a monster galley, "the largest ever beheld in those seas."

This mammoth ship was not a new vessel, but one which had been formerly taken from the Moors. Ayala, the chronicler, was himself on board this ship, and in command of a portion of it, and from him we learn that it had three castles on its deck of several stories high, in which cross-bowmen were stationed, who, from their advantageous position, were capable of inflicting great damage on an enemy. This ship also contained on its lower deck a stable for forty horses, and, besides its sailors, carried a crew of 160 men-at-arms and 120 archers. Its captain was Garci Alvarez de Toledo. Other admirals and captains of this fleet were Don Diego de Padilla, whom we may reasonably suspect of being as much an amateur at naval warfare as Pedro himself, Garci Jufre Tenorio, brother of Juan and Alfonso Jufre whom the King had lately had executed, Suer Perez de Quiñones, Diego Gonzales, and Martin Lopez de Cordova. The gathering together of this great fleet is another proof of

the energy, resolution, and determination of Pedro's nature.

In his conduct of the whole expedition, however, he presents a rather amateurish figure.

Thus, he gathers together, partly out of sheer bravado, a prodigious fleet, a fleet far larger than was necessary, and then when he has assembled it, notice what he does ! Obsessed with his ideas of impressing everybody, he directs the whole flotilla on to a point where any success he might achieve would be little more than an advertisement of his glory. He wanted, he said, a decisive engagement, but it is fair to imagine that what he really wanted was a terrific display of sensational fighting, a regular boy's fancy of a vast naval engagement, all blood and glory and "prizes." He was only twenty-six at the time, and it is really rather a more pleasing bit of his character which he shows us here.

First of all Pedro took his ships to Barcelona, where, after some skirmishing and manœuvring, an action of sorts was fought off the town, without material injury to either side. Attempts by Pedro to force an entrance to the harbour were unsuccessful, and in the end, he retreated and sailed for the Balearic isles which then belonged to Aragon. Pedro IV. soon followed him into these seas, and again a number of futile engagements occurred.

Dead calms, blockades, defections, the expiration of the treaty by which the Portuguese vessels were to serve with Castile for the term of three months, brought Don Pedro's mighty armada to a poor pass. And

Aragon on its side, with no great heart in the war, was ready and glad enough of an opportunity to dismantle and demobilise.

A few hardy spirits remained at sea on either side, but they were as much pirates as anything else.

Thus ended Pedro's vast naval scheme.

CHAPTER XIX

A MEDIÆVAL WRIT-SERVER

PETER THE CRUEL, whose epithet may now be employed without the least compunction, proceeded to seek a recompense with his military forces for the ill-fortune of his naval campaign.

A battle was fought at Avariana at the foot of some mountains. The affair ended in the total defeat of the Castilian forces, and Don Pedro lost in the person of Henestrosa one of his best and most faithful servants.

The loss of this engagement put him so much out of humour with himself and his courtiers, that he had to seek relief in further bloodshed and executions.

He now perpetrated an act parallel to that which our own Richard III. (to whom he has been compared) is generally supposed to have committed. It is almost the story of the princes in the Tower over again. These princes were a little older than the English ones are generally thought to have been; otherwise the murders are very similar.

The younger sons of Eleoñora de Guzman and the brothers of Enrique, Don Juan, and Don Pedro, had been imprisoned at Carmona for a long time. Juan was nineteen, Pedro not quite fourteen. The Pedro of this memoir has always up to this point had some

reason sufficient or insufficient for his fell deeds, but on this occasion there does not seem to be any excuse or purpose why he should have executed these innocent princes.¹ They were latent pretenders, no doubt; but, in the absence of any evidence to show that their existence was imminently dangerous to him, it is only possible to attribute his act to something like a madness for murder which was beginning to obsess him. The victims were put to death in their prison by a *ballestero* of the guard.²

"All who loved the King's service," says Ayala, "grieved that they died thus, for they were innocent, and had never sinned against the King."

Don Pedro now came again into violent encounter with the Church. Between him and Avignon there had been little love shown. Probably he resented Innocent's well-meaning but rather dull Latin letters as much as the Holy Father himself was scandalised and angry at the rebellious attitude of his spiritual son.

Pedro countermanded papal edicts, forbade the observance of ordinances in papal bulls, and confiscated ecclesiastical property whenever it suited him. On more than one occasion he put priests to death.

To do justice to his family, it is right to observe that he was no more culpable in the matter of treachery and perjury than any of his brothers. Don Tello and Don Enrique deceived each other with the greatest

¹ Ferrer del Rio says, in his *Examen del reinado de Don Pedro*, that the Conde de la Roca, an apologist, excuses Peter for these murders on the ground that in those barbarous times it was sometimes necessary to make the punishment precede the crime.

² Ayala, Ann. 1359, Cap. XXIII.

good-will whenever it suited them to do so. Their oaths of allegiance were as trumpery and inconsiderable as Pedro's ; indeed Pedro was always characterised by a certain sense of honour in his dealings, while his brothers were never remarkable for anything of the kind. Don Pedro was, at any rate, a strong man in his villainies.

He had now become an absolute master of deception and, considering the company he kept, he must have needed all his skill in this direction.

Now follows the tale of the assassination of Osorio.

There were two *Ricos Hombres* against whom Don Pedro was at this time directing his malevolent intentions. Pero Nuñez de Guzman and Alvarez Osorio had deserted him after the battle of Avariana, and he had not forgotten the fact. Don Pedro marched against Guzman, and suddenly made an appearance in Leon, before the noble had received any intimation of his coming. The knight, who was in the open country, was fortunate enough to receive a message from one of his squires that the King was in pursuit of him. Mounting his horse, he rode with great speed to his castle of Aviados, pursued by Pedro to the very edge of the moat. Guzman had just time to cross the drawbridge, and swing it up after him, before the revengeful monarch came along with a body of horse. The King's own mount was very jaded, for he had that day ridden seventy miles ; had it been fresh, Guzman would never have seen his castle again.

Pedro did not wish to waste time on a siege, so he withdrew to turn his attention to Osorio. Now

Guzman had been Adelantado of Leon, and the crafty King, approaching his second victim in a different manner, offered Osorio the post, in the place of Guzman cashiered and proscribed.

Osorio, who was a simple fellow, and had no talent for life in Spain in the fourteenth century, thought that his defection had been forgiven, and gladly accepted the proffered office at the expense of his friend and accomplice, Pero Guzman.

He came to King Peter, and kissed his hands. He was charmingly received. He was "our faithful Adelantado of Leon" now. Peter conversed with him pleasantly enough, and asked the pleasure of his company for the journey to Valladolid.

The courtiers of the royal party now imagined Orosio to be a new favourite, and paid him subsidiary homage on that account. And on the way, when the royal party made a halt a few leagues outside Valladolid, Diego de Padilla invited him to dinner.

At the table there were Don Pedro, Diego de Padilla, and Alvarez Osorio, the latter feeling very proud of the distinguished company in which he found himself.

Into this group of men there came suddenly, by previous orders, those two ruffians, Juan Diente and Garci Diaz, the King's *ballesteros*, at whose hands so much noble Castilian blood had flown.

The King's expression grew a little anxious and excited. Osorio had not yet seen the executioners. Padilla, the pacific and gentle, had, however, and trembled and wondered whose fate it was that lay in their

murderous hands. Was it he, or was it Osorio that must die? He recollected how flatteringly the King had turned his attention of late to the man sitting with him at their common table.

Perhaps in some way he had offended that dreadful majesty at the head of this rude wayside feast. But the crash of the maces on Osorio's head at once relieved and horrified him. Diente and Diaz cut off Osorio's head, and presumably the meal was resumed.

And now, to introduce a little lighter matter into this chronicle of savage deeds, I will narrate an incident which is taken from Zuñiga.¹

The Archbishop of Seville had, by order of the Pope, commenced a process against the King, whereby he claimed for his Church and diocese certain tithes. In this suit, it was necessary to cite Don Pedro as a party, but the office of writ-server was one that nobody cared to undertake. The professional notaries and process-men begged to be excused from so dangerous a mission, but at last a man was found, a cleric, more daring than the rest. This person, who some say was an archdeacon, and would, therefore, perhaps, regard his task in the light of a possible opportunity of martyrdom, was cautious and crafty as well as brave.

He hired a boat and waited for a time until the wind and the current of the river, and the direction of the King's rides on horseback should all be favourably coincident to him. When this moment at last arrived, and the ecclesiastical writ-server saw Don

¹ *Annales de Sevilla*, quoted in Mérimée.

Pedro coming for a ride along the banks of the Guadalquivir, he steered his craft into the bank, jumped ashore, proffered the writ, and re-embarked as quickly as he could.

What followed must have been rather amusing for the courtiers, who accompanied the King on this occasion.

Pedro did not know but what he had to deal with a lunatic, yet, when he perceived the true nature of the document thrust into his hands, he was so irritated by this new method of writ-serving, that he plunged into the river after the daring clerk, and pursued him with drawn sword and dreadful threats.

The archdeacon, managed to steer into water that was too deep for Pedro's horse, and by a lucky chance made good his escape to Avignon.

After remedying in his own manner the defection of Osorio and other unfortunates, Pedro took the field with an army of over 15,000 men. This force was to be employed against Enrique and his brother Don Sancho, who were entrenched near Najera. At Miranda, there had been, just previous to the King's arrival, an insurrection against the Jews. Don Pedro had the leaders of this revolt arrested and either burnt alive or boiled to death in huge cauldrons. Of this form of punishment, Zurita, the editor of Ayala, says, that it was a usual one, sanctioned by law and custom, and is not to be particularly adduced as evidence of Don Pedro's savage cruelty. He instances a case where it was employed by King Fernando the Saint.

The vessels used for this boiling of human beings were probably enormous jars, in which it was usual for the people to store wine, oil, and wheat.¹

And now may be included an incident which shows Don Pedro in another light. He is reflected here as a true mediæval, superstitious and childish in awe of the supernatural.

The story bears a remarkable similarity to others in history and legend—to those narratives of ghostly warnings on the eves of battles, and the coming of spirits with mournful prophecies.

While encamped *en route* for Najera, there appeared to the King—according to one version, a monk, according to another, a ghost of one of his murdered brothers. The narrative which accepts the visitant as having been of a ghostly character makes him speak in the affected and extremely literary style which so many ghosts seem to employ.

“Thou shalt be a stone at Madrid,” moaned the spirit, and made its exit from the King’s tent with the traditional chain-rattlings and other theatrical effects of legendary ghosts.

Various, in the other story, the monk was more explicit if less picturesque. He demanded a private audience of Don Pedro, and told him that St. Dominic had appeared to him in a dream. In this dream the saint had commanded him to warn the King, that if he did not amend his ways, his brother, Don Enrique, would slay him with his own hands.

Don Pedro was sorely troubled at first by the words

¹ Mérimée.

of the visionary, and the remarkable manner in which he uttered them.

Before long, however, he became cooler, and sought for another and natural explanation of the monk's manner and address. He came to the conclusion, that he was an emissary of the enemy, perhaps a spy, or one who hoped to trouble the superstitious minds of the soldiery with an air of pretended inspiration. The man was tortured to confess his real mission and business, and to avow his masters, but he held to his statement that he was but the messenger of St. Dominic. Pedro, who had for the moment banished his doubts, was annoyed by the monk's obstinacy, and had him burnt alive in the camp. In the midst of the flames which were consuming him, the priest still continued to call on St. Dominic. Although, in the battle which followed, the royalist troops gained a victory and drove the Conde's forces in confusion from the field, the obstinate faith of the prophet of evil whom he had murdered continued to trouble Don Pedro. He neglected to follow up his success, and sounded a retreat at a moment when fortune was all on his side. His knights gathered about him, and urged him in the morning to make an attack on the town of Najera, where the Conde and his broken army were weakly sheltering. But Peter took no notice of their counsel nor of the dictates of common sense on this occasion. He was troubled in a new way. Here was the opportunity he had spent years in looking for, for which blood beyond count had flowed, and when it came to him, it found him nerveless and

weak, like a hysterical school-girl. He was undecided. He would attack, and then he would not, and at last, he abruptly ordered his army to San Domingo, no doubt with the idea of making a personal reparation to the saintly inspirer of the dead monk. Don Enrique and his men lay in Najera anxiously listening for the sound of the King's men, for their position was desperate, and a strong assault must have placed the city in Don Pedro's hands. When they saw the royal forces dissolving away in the distance, they were dumbfounded, and could only attribute to Divine intervention so unlooked for a happening.

During this strange mood and temper of the King, so suitable for the birth of schemes of peace, the Cardinal Legate, Guy de Boulogne, sought audience. We have seen Avignon watch for a long time with manifest distress (distress that manifested itself in long letters in Church Latin) the conditions devastating Spain.

The Cardinal was successful in his work, inasmuch as Don Pedro relinquished all active part in hostilities, and betook himself to Seville to seek consolation from Maria.

Meanwhile the enemy, that is Enrique and the Infante Fernando and Pedro IV., had an opportunity of readjusting their positions towards each other. We have the evidence of a curious treaty, solemnly entered into by the two young princes, in which they engage to reveal to each other all overtures made to them by the King of Castile, "to work that Prince all possible injury and dishonour willingly and loyally." Such



DON ENRIQUE DE TRASTAMARA AFTERWARDS DON ENRIQUE II
OF CASTILE

brutal language strikes one as marking the naïve diplomacy of the times.

The deception of the written word is perhaps a stage in mental evolution beyond the deception of the spoken. We have seen how accustomed all these kings and princes were to the former; perhaps, as for all primitive men, the written word had in their eyes an awe and sanctity, a certain character with which they hesitated to tamper. At any rate, it is a very blunt document.

Almost against what were his own wishes at the moment, Pedro's arms triumphed on sea as well as on land. He had not long enjoyed the rest and peace of his Alcazar, when there came sailing up the Guadalquivir, his adventurer-captain, Zorzo, with four Aragonese galleys in train, which he had captured. Don Pedro, so far aroused himself from his depression as to order the captains of these prizes to be treated as pirates and put to death. Sir J. Dillon remarks of these executions that they must not be ascribed to the peculiar cruelty of Don Pedro, as it was usual at the time so to treat the commanders of such predatory galleys as were these Aragonese vessels. It is a fact that the line between a properly-commissioned man-of-war strayed from its own fleet, and a pirate vessel, was perilously fine at this time, both with regard to the actions of such a ship and their consequences.

Portugal had lately come under the rule of a new sovereign, a Pedro too, first of his line, the memorable lover who cast so brave a taunt in the face of death. It was he who brought his dead mistress from her

tomb to ride in triumph through the land and sit beside him once again in the cathedral for their coronation. He did for Inez what Peter of Castile could never have done for Maria de Padilla. He has flung her memory like a perfume down the centuries, and stolen a tribute from the days that are not yet.¹ Maria de Padilla, who was a good mother, bringing up her three little daughters and her son in the Alcazar at Seville, was at this time as happy as the possession of a lord like Don Pedro allowed her to be. These incessant murders of her lover were, we know, utterly distasteful to her, and, on more than one occasion, her kind heart stood between some man and a horrible death. To her and her children, and the palace, and the palace gardens it was, that the stern young King always turned in his hour of distress or trouble, and in his unchronicled hours, Don Pedro was perhaps not less a good father for being an intolerable king.

The history of these children of King Peter and Maria de Padilla is interesting inasmuch as two of the daughters married into our own royal family. Constanza was wedded to John, Duke of Gaunt, and Isabella to Edmund Langley, Duke of York, by whom he had Richard, Earl of Cambridge, who, marrying his cousin, Anne Mortimer of the house of Clarence, had Richard, Duke of York, father of Edward IV. So that the blood of Peter the Cruel may be said to be in our present royal house.

Although the King was, in the main, faithful to

¹ Boccaccio has a Sonnet about Inez and Pedro.

Maria de Padilla, there were times, as we have seen, when he took other mistresses.

At this period are mentioned the names of several women who interested the King, generally to their own undoing. For Don Pedro was as callous and brutal in love as he was in war, and it is said, that the good mothers of the noble families of Castile took especial pains to keep their daughters away from the court, while those castles and palaces which the King honoured with his sudden visits hid, at these times, the distaff side of their house in privacy and seclusion. Pedro had a greedy eye for women and had no scruples about satisfying his desires.

About this time he had a certain Urraca Osorio, who must have been some relative — perhaps a sister—of the knight whose murder at the King's table has been described, burnt alive, so the legends say. The story is that he so treated her because she scorned his advances. Ayala, however, shows that her death, which he does not say was by burning, was due to political causes.

The Castilian King also about this time viewed the charms of Maria de Henestrosa with favour, and according to Ayala, found her not hard of heart.

Garci Laso Carillo, the husband of Maria, perceiving his presence to be something in the nature of an act of *lèse-majesté*, betook himself into Aragon, leaving his brother Gomez to report to him how things proceeded. Gomez was shortly afterwards executed by royal orders, either for resisting the King's attentions to his sister, or for actual plotting with the Conde.

Gutier Fernandez, the King's chief minister, also suffered death on the charge of engaging in secret correspondence with the Infante of Aragon.

Fernandez wrote the King a letter just before his execution, in which he defends himself and warns the King of the probable consequences of his too numerous executions.

"Sire," he says, "I, Gutier Fernandez de Toledo, salute you and take leave of you, being about to appear before another Lord, mightier than you are. Sire, your highness is not ignorant that my mother and brothers and myself have since the time of your birth been members of your household ; and I need not call to your recollection the insults we endured, and the dangers we incurred in your service at the time when Doña Leonor de Guzman had sole power in this kingdom. Sire, I have ever served you loyally ; I believe that it is because I have spoken too freely of things important to your interests that you now condemn me to death. Let your pleasure be accomplished, may God pardon you, for I have not deserved my fate. And now, Sire, I tell you in this solemn moment, and it will be my last word of counsel, that if you do not replace your sword in the scabbard, and cease to strike off heads like mine, you will lose your kingdom and peril your life. Bethink you well, for it is a loyal subject who thus adjures you in the hour when the truth alone ought to be spoken." ¹

Gutier Fernandez de Toledo then sealed this letter of his, and bared his throat for the executioner.

¹ Ayala.

CHAPTER XX

GRANADA

*" . . . One evening at the close
Of Ramazán, ere the better moon arose."*

THE old King Juzef Ben Ismail died, and left his throne to his son Muhamad, who was then twenty years of age.

And in the moon of Xawal, this Prince was proclaimed King of Granada, in the afternoon of the day of Alfitra in the year 755.

Muhamad had a brother called Ismail, and both of these princes were handsome and well favoured; both of them were young, but, while Muhamad was virtuous and gentle, Ismail was corrupt and wicked.¹

Muhamad, the new king, was good, kindly, compassionate, and of so tender a heart that the misfortunes of others readily brought tears to his eyes.

He gained the affection of every man who had the good chance to hold intercourse with him. He had a high notion of courtly dignity and the honour of his position, and all flatterers were banished from his presence. He was fond of books, learning and knightly tournaments.

His brother Ismail, on the other hand, was given

¹ Conde, *Hist. Arabes*.

up to every kind of luxury and pleasure. He had a countenance of great beauty, so much so that he might have been taken for one of the loveliest of women.

He was weak, charming, effeminate, and treacherous, and his earliest movements, after the enthronement of his brother, were designed towards setting himself in the place of Muhamad.

To this end he gathered round him courtiers and flatterers, who formed a cabal and conspiracy against the King.

And Ismail's mother, a Sultana of the late King, and Abu Said, his Vizier, plotted to put the prince upon the throne of Granada.

One night, when all their plans were laid, a band of one hundred men escalated the walls and windows of the Alcazar by stealth, and lay hidden behind curtains and in secret places, until the signal was given at midnight. Then, with flaming torches and drawn swords, they burst into the apartments of the palace, putting to death all who barred their way, and plundering the rich stores and ornaments which they found. But when the Prince Ismail came to join his creatures and friends, he was told that the King himself had escaped. Hearing the noise and confusion, and being warned of its meaning, Muhamad had retired to an apartment of his harem, and there a beautiful damsel, who was a favourite of his, had dressed him as a girl, and together they had fled.

With another son of the late King, they escaped

to Medina Guadix. Granada was thus divided into two factions, one of whom was for Muhammad; the other for Ismail. But Ismail was soon assassinated by his Vizier, Abu Said, who seized the throne for himself, and proclaimed Muhammad a traitor. Muhammad now appealed to the King of Castile, to which State Granada was at this time supposed to be tributary. Abu Said turned to Pedro IV. for support and protection.

In such a manner was the unfortunate Peninsula always kept in a state of war.

The King of Aragon imagined, that in such an alliance as was suggested by the Pretender of Granada, he would find the opportunity of crushing Castile that he had long been seeking.

He promptly made plans and arrangements with the Infantes, Don Fernando and Don Enrique, for a campaign and a division of the spoils of war. He imagined that the terrible rule of Don Pedro must have brought that monarch's kingdom to the pass when it would be prepared to accept either of his princeling lieutenants in preference to the King who ruled it. The preparations for war, the making known of the negotiations between the King of Aragon and Abu Said, and the treaties between him, the King, and the two princes, caused Don Pedro to relinquish his attacks on the enemy's territory with a view to protecting his own. He was greatly incensed at the conduct of the Pretender, Abu Said, and transferred his fury from Pedro IV. to him. All his pride and vanity were wounded by this rash act of a

presumptuous courtier. He forgot all about Aragon ; nothing would satisfy him now but the punishment of Abu Said. He was always capable of sacrificing his material prospects in order to gratify his instinct of vanity. He had always a romantic devotion to that extraordinary ideal of his personality, whose realisation he seemed to demand from others but never from himself.

There is no doubt about it. Peter the Cruel had in him something of a great man, even if it is only something of an unpleasantly great man. His personality burns in the sombre setting of this time as a great lustrous ruby, fiercely scintillant, and of the colour of blood.

Rays of its wicked light found their way all over Europe into the pages of contemporary chroniclers. While the kings of other distant lands go unmentioned and neglected, Pedro's character is marked in the books of Villani, Polydore Virgil, Chaucer, Froissart, Guillaume de Machault,¹ and many another foreign author.

The indefatigable legate of Avignon now perceived an opportunity of bringing his labours to a satisfactory conclusion.

In the year 1361, about the middle of May, a treaty of peace between Aragon and Castile was concluded, principally through his efforts.

As a corollary to this treaty, an amnesty was

¹ A fourteenth century poet and musician, in his youth *valet de chambre* to Philip le Bel. Author of *la Prise d'Alexandrie* and an interesting treatise on mediæval musical instruments.



PETER THE CRUEL.

proclaimed for the benefit of those who had, in the late war, borne arms against their lawful sovereign. To this there were some exceptions, including on Don Pedro's part, naturally enough, the Conde, the Infante Don Fernando, and Gomez Carillo, cousin to him who had been executed the year before, and the redoubtable Pero Carillo, whose trick on Pedro the latter was not likely to forget. Among the others who were thus proscribed were Gonzalez Lucio, the Governor of Taragona, who had sold that place to Aragon, Lopez de Padilla, Diego Perez Sarmiento, Alvar Perez de Guzman, the husband of the King's late mistress, Aldonza Coronel, and Garci Lasso Carillo, the spouse of Maria de Henestrosa, who was about this time living with the King.

It will be noticed that Don Tello and Don Sancho, the King's brothers, were allowed to go unproscribed. This must, I imagine, be attributed to the influence of the Cardinal Guy de Boulogne, rather than to Don Pedro himself. The excommunication and interdict cast upon the King and Castile by the late legate Cardinal Guillen were removed.

An offensive and defensive alliance between Aragon and Castile followed, in which each sovereign pledged himself, in almost lyrical vein, to be to his ally the "friend of his friend and the foe of his foe."

The Cardinal was so pleased with his handiwork that he was not content to abstain from a diplomacy in which he appeared to be so successful. He now turned his attentions to the domestic differences of Don Pedro. He wished to excuse from the ban

of proscription those princes and knights whose conduct had brought it upon themselves.

He established a kind of court in the new city of Pamplona, and there solemnly revised the interdict under which the Castilian refugees lay. This act of his, however, though it excited no especial comment from Don Pedro at the time, was assuredly one which, in his heart, he considered as distinctly impertinent.

Don Enrique and Don Sancho went to France once more to take up the commands of a few Companies, and Don Fernando retired to Catalonia.

Meanwhile, in Granada all was confusion.

Although Abu Said had proffered no act of overt hostility against Castile, the fact of his having approached the King of Aragon was sufficient to ensure the deep and lasting anger of Don Pedro. To his brother Muhamad, who was at Ronda, the King lent money and promised an army.

For this profession of charity Don Pedro won easily enough from the gentle king-in-exile agreements which tended in their fruition to be at least as favourable to Castile's enlargement as to the future dignity and power of Muhamad. This latter, who was a philosopher, and something of a Moslem Marcus Aurelius, was bound to be worsted in any bargain with an astute and crafty man like Pedro. But he made little effort. Indeed, it is said that he concerned himself scarcely at all with the conduct of the war. He hoped that in due time his subjects would restore him to his dominion—no doubt when

the philosophic truth of his position occurred to them.

Contrary to their general good fortune in war, and much to the chagrin of Don Pedro, the Castilian forces sustained a defeat at almost the first encounter with the Moslems of Abu Said.

Diego de Padilla and Enrique Enriquez, who were in command of a considerable army of three or four thousand men, were badly beaten in an encounter with the Moors in the neighbourhood of Guadix. It appears that the Christian soldiery were rendered very limp and superstitious by the bad portents of the omens cast for the army by its Adalides or soothsayers. These men, who resembled the harus-pices of pagan Rome under her Consuls and early Emperors, were persons of great importance in the military constitution of Spain at this time, and though their authority and influence were principally exerted on the militia and common soldiery, they were not things to be left out of account by those of more exalted rank and intelligence. These Adalides were nominally guides or scouts, but to these regular military duties they added certain rights and offices of their own, calculated to invest them with a superstitious power over the minds of the vulgar.

Ayala goes out of his way in his chronicle to condemn the mysterious practices of these folk. They were allowed to bear arms and a banner, to eat at the same board with knights, and over the common foot-soldiers they had immediate authority capable of peremptory exercise.

In the *Partidas* of Alfonso X. their position is defined with great exactitude. Although these folk were privileged in many ways, their position was not entirely a happy one, for in the event of their prognostications or scouting, whether natural or supernatural, proving unfortunate, they had to suffer the usual and just fate of all false prophets.

If they or their sons, who were thus evidently presumed to be in the secret, were captured by the enemy, they were promptly ransomed and forthwith put to death. This, no doubt, helped to ensure correct sorcery from the Adalides ; at any rate, it must have made them somewhat careful.

In this battle with the forces of Abu Said, Diego de Padilla was wounded in the arm and taken prisoner. Enriquez returned home with the wreckage of his army—to meet the anger of Pedro.

Abu Said was not, however, entirely delighted with his rather unexpected victory. He knew that the arm of the King of Castile was long, and his anger slow to die. Moreover, the Moor was aware that the rest of military feudal Europe was ever ready to construe these local troubles into an attack on the Christian faith, and to defend it accordingly by the most astonishing and blood-thirsty reprisals. Added to these significant facts, it was rumoured throughout the Peninsula that the late peace between England and France had had the effect of throwing a host of professional fighters out of occupation, and that the present situation, lit as it was with the promise of rich plunder, and certain of the blessing of Avignon, would

be to them a great opportunity. The Pretender thought awhile, and came to the conclusion that through the medium of Diego de Padilla, the King's right-hand man, he had a chance of concluding an honourable and desirable peace.

When he heard that a redoubtable Captain of Free Companies, Sir Hugh de Calverley, was crossing the Pyrenees, he made haste to send Padilla to the Court of Seville to treat for him.

Indeed his victory had been followed by a series of defections which gave him little chance to do aught else.

Padilla, who probably did not at all relish the task set him by his captor, was received by his King with marked coldness. But for his relationship to Don Pedro, his ill-success would probably have cost him his life. Although Padilla was supposed to be a missionary of peace, the war between the two kingdoms continued in a desultory fashion.

At last, however, Abu Said made up his mind to visit in person Don Pedro in Seville. "Collecting all his treasure in hand, he left Granada privately," and arrived in Castile with but a few hundred horsemen. It was these same treasures, displayed in all their Oriental magnificence, that tempted the greed of Don Pedro, and caused Abu Said's death. We can hardly think it wisdom in a king coming to plead for peace to attire himself and his suite in a manner likely to excite the envy and wound the vanity of the supplicated monarch. Probably, though, the Oriental mind of Abu Said could not conceive the existence of his wonderful

jewels apart from himself. Jewels are indeed personal things to the true lover of them—and who is this more than an Eastern? They languish, they lose their lustre, they seem pitiful and forlorn away from the loving fingers and breast. All men have a toy in the nurseries of their brain, for which they are prepared to be unutterably foolish. Abu's toy was a collection of jewels of incomparable richness and beauty, one of which, at least, now adorns the royal Crown of England.

Pedro's toy, as we have seen, was a childish vanity and an infantile megalomania, for which he, too, paid dearly in his own hour of reckoning.

I like to think of Abu Said in his snowy gown and with slippers of some vivid North African hue, bearing on his breast these gems "worth a king's ransom"; among them, of a certainty, that giant ruby, "great like a racket ball," which was in time to come into the hands of our own Queen Elizabeth. Had he but known it, the vanity and glitter of these trinkets was his sentence. It was a necklace of death that he was wearing in these wonderful stones.

Don Pedro received him in great state and with a display of courtly magnificence. Seated upon his throne in the Alcazar of Seville, he listened to the following speech from the dragoman of Abu Said:—

"Sire," said this person, "my master knows that the kings of Granada are vassals and tributaries of the kings of Castile. It is to his suzerain that my lord appeals on the subject of his quarrel with Muhamad, the so-called King of Granada. To your highness must the task of judging between them belong. Now

the origin of the dispute is that the Moors, ill-treated and trampled upon by this Muhamad, have elected as their lord Abu Said, by his birth a descendant of kings, and by his virtues worthy of his lineage. Were the controversy between him and Muhamad only, the issue could not be doubtful ; but who can withstand your power ? To offer resistance, moreover, would be to fail in the duty of a vassal. This is, therefore, the reason, Sire, why my lord appears before you, and submits himself to your justice, persuaded that your decision will redound to your character for magnanimity and to the honour of your Crown."

Another part of the little theatrical entertainment which Abu had devised to secure a good reception of his cause with the King consisted in the introduction of a remarkable old Arab, by name Edriz, who was a famous counsellor of kings, and something of a prophet.

During the delivery of Abu's speech by his dragoman, this Edriz kept a close scrutiny on Don Pedro's face.

At the conclusion of the harangue, Edriz exclaimed : " The sentence of the King of Castile will assuredly display his equity and clemency ; but if, contrary to all probability, it should be favourable to Muhamad—my master, Abu Said, hopes to obtain for himself and his retinue permission to cross the sea and lead a retired life in Africa."

It must be admitted that, as a prophecy, this is poor, and exhibits the evidence of a confederate. Even as a matter of policy, it did not give Don Pedro credit for much perception or knowledge of mankind.

The whole scene apparently made little impression on him, for he merely replied with gravity that he would examine the claims of the rival Moors, and pronounce a judgment later in accordance with strict justice.

At this, the assembled Grenadines, who were much in awe of Don Pedro, bowed low before him, and cried out in Arabic :—

“Sire, may Allah preserve you ! We lean on the greatness of your wisdom, and commend ourselves to your mercy.”

Then the Pretender and his suite were conducted with courtesy to the quarters prepared for them in the Jewry.

The court of Don Pedro fell to gossiping over the probable decision of the King, and the chances of the two Moorish contestants were freely discussed. In everyone's mouth was talk of the precious stones that the Arabs were wearing. On Abu Said's breast, besides the gigantic ruby, were huge pearls of great value and beauty ; one of them nearly the size of a pigeon's egg. And among the train of this king, who seems like a character in the *Thousand and One Nights*, there was a little moor who had in a leathern strap 730 rubies. Cornelians, turquoises, opals, and other gems were distributed among the Emirs and Captains of this band. Even some of the pages were begemmed with pearls, many of which were as large as a pea.

In a few days, Abu Said and some of his principal Emirs were invited to dine with the King at the Palace of the Grand Master of Santiago.

Towards the end of the meal, a silence fell upon those present—a silence which served to herald the sudden entrance of Martin Lopez, the King's chamberlain. Those who knew the ways of Don Pedro were in no doubt but that some ill deed was to happen, and we may imagine that Abu Said, "the Red King," as the Castilians called him, looked upon the grave and silent faces around him with much distrust.

No mention had been made at the dinner of any decision or judgment in the matter under Don Pedro's consideration, and when Martin Lopez was followed by the royal *ballesteros*, Abu Said must have been able to read his fate in the faces of his fellow guests.

It is rather remarkable how often Don Pedro had the victims of his justice or anger arrested or executed at the table. The interruption of a meal by a murder does not seem to have affected his appetite at all.

On this occasion the actual execution of the prisoner was deferred. Martin Lopez and his *ballesteros* arrested the Moorish king, and lodged him in a dungeon with his Emirs. There, all their finery and jewels were taken from them. They were stripped of their clothes and searched, so that there could be no possibility of their concealing anything of their treasure. After a delay of a couple of days, in which Abu's fate was doubtless being considered and planned, *ballesteros* went to his prison and told him he must appear before the King. They mounted him upon an ass, and clad him with mock dignity in a purple robe, and led him, followed by thirty-seven of his Emirs,

beyond the city's walls, amid the derision of the populace.

This remarkable procession was directed to a field outside the city, called the plain of Tablada, a place set apart for the execution of criminals. Here all the Emirs, together with Abu Said himself, were fastened to stakes or piles placed in the earth, while a herald blew on his trumpet and cried out aloud that this was the King's sentence upon those traitors who had put to death their Lord Ismail. Then some horsemen and even some knights caracolled and cantered round the prisoners as in a *juego de cañas*, which is a kind of Arabic prisoners' base. Then suddenly this gloating over the vanquished, this knightly high-spiritedness, turned into reality, and a javelin, quickly to be followed by others, was hurled at Abu, it is said by Don Pedro himself.

"Take that in payment of the miserable treaty you caused me to make with the King of Aragon—and that for the Castle of Ariza which I lost through your fault."

The wounded Moor replied from his stake, "Is this thy chivalry." But his words were hushed in a swift rain of darts which pinned him in every portion of his body to his stake.

The Emirs, one after another, shared his fate, until all were killed. Then were the heads of Abu and his companions sent to Muhamad, that that philosopher might read the red and dripping tale of his Suzerain's power, and perceive how dangerous was the art of kingship.

Though Abu Said, in his death, appears here rather in the light of a martyr or badly-treated person, we find that his own conduct had been just as cruel and bloodthirsty as that of Don Pedro.

He had executed young Ismail and another brother of his, and had treated their dead bodies with every kind of indignity.

But from Ayala we learn that—"All who loved the King's service were grieved at this deed, and the way in which it was done."¹

The Arabian historians seem to think that Abu deserved his fate, although they are disgusted at the treachery and unchivalric conduct of the Castilian King.

In the old chronicle of Muhamed Ben Abdalla, called the *Specimen of the Full Moon*, the author advises us :—

"That man should learn from his (Abu Said's) end that there is no station or power which can exempt the evil-doer from the justice of the eternal decrees . . . nor can they prosper who seek a defence and a shield anywhere save in God.

"They are like the spider labouring at her web—oh how fragile are the labours of the spider ! "

¹ 1362, Cap. V.

CHAPTER XXI

LE BON VIEUX TEMS

DESPITE the anxious and disturbed condition of things in Castile, time was occasionally found for amusement in the holding of tourneys and jousts. In a certain tournament, which occurred during a respite from the almost incessant wars which troubled the Peninsula, Don Pedro played a rather singular part.

The affair took place at Seville, and the combat was between four *Hidalgos*. The challengers, who, it is suggested, were merely the instruments of the King, accused the brothers Arias and Vasco de Baamonte of treason. The challengers were two knights of Leon, Lope Nuñez de Carvalledo and Martin de Losada. Don Pedro was to preside over the joust, and his partiality towards the challengers and anger against the challenged is supposed to have been due to the fact that the latter were related to Gutier Fernandez whom he had had executed.

According to Sainte-Palaye, in his treatise on the laws and customs of ancient chivalry, these tournaments and combats were made exhibitions of great pomp and splendour.

They became the outward symbol to the

bourgeoisie — the citizens, burghers, merchants, and clerics—of the power of the system by which all society was then sustained.

For it was said that of the body politic, the church was the head; chivalry, the arms; and the merchants, citizens, and labourers, the inferior members. To such events as these tournaments the youthful page or body-squire looked forward as to a time when he might realise his own manhood and individuality.

Often enough, however, these tournaments degenerated into mere displays of snobbery and extravagance. Under Edward III. in England, an ordinance had to be passed to regulate their demoralising frequency and luxurious character. In France, Rommons de Venous, as a spectacle of what he called magnificence, had thirty-nine fine horses burnt alive before one of these combats. In another case, 30,000 pieces of silver were sown in the field where the tournament was to take place. From time to time, the Popes forbade these exhibitions, which were often fruitful of much licentiousness and debauchery. After the stirring events of the day, the good knights' thoughts drifted naturally enough into amorous and Bacchic channels. It was then that they listened to their *jongleurs* and troubadours, and drank "honey piment" and burnt wine and hippocras, and passed round the "sugar-plumbs" and allowed "farcical posture-dances" to be continued late into the night.

All of which things sound innocent enough, especially

the "sugar-plumbs," but they were regarded by the purists of chivalry as very dangerous.

If the tournament were of great importance, it was often preceded on the afternoon before by a kind of dress-rehearsal, called the vesper tournament. On the day itself, the day of the master tournament, the ground appointed for the combat was decked out in all magnificence and colour. Pavilions with brocaded curtains screened the most noble and distinguished of the company. From tent and pole were flying banners, pennons, and streamers of silk. Minstrels were stationed in one corner of the ground to provide martial music ; pages and sergeants-at-arms walked about the enclosure, keeping order and regulating the proceedings, just as constables would at an athletic meeting in our time.

The ladies were generally placed together in a special part of the ground, where their presence might animate the knights to deeds of valour. Indeed the ladies were a very important item in the constitution of tournaments, and it is very questionable if the whole affair was not really got up to please them and win favour in their eyes. They, of course, distributed favours among the combatants, who returned, each to his own lady if he were successful, such dainty trophies as his prowess might have won. When the contests were prolonged and numerous, and excitement ran high, the ladies sometimes so stripped themselves of ribbons, laces, and parts of their dress, as to be by the end of the entertainment in a most dishevelled condition. Brantôme tells

of a tournament at which the ladies so divested themselves of their attire, that at its conclusion they appeared bareheaded with their hair all streaming over their shoulders, and in extreme dishabille: their robes were without sleeves; their hoods, cloaks, kerchiefs, stomachers and mantuas were all gone or in ribbons, so that it became necessary to end the contest if only to prevent the ladies from catching cold.

The judges, who usually consisted of old and experienced knights, were placed on a kind of throne, and the decision of doubtful points was referred to them. If a king or a great prince were present, this office became his by virtue of his rank. On the occasion of this particular tournament between the four Spanish knights, Don Pedro appointed himself as arbiter.

The King's Chamberlain, Martin Lopez, acted as Marshal of the Field.

Entered then the combatants in armour—most likely of mail, for plate armour did not gain a firm hold in Spain until after the incursion of Du Guesclin and the Free Companies.¹ The Castilian armour was more like the Moorish at this time; that is lighter and less cumbersome than the heavy plate armour used by the English and French soldiers. Of these Granadines, Froissart says, "They were not so well nor so strongly armed as the Christians." These four combatants would wear hauberks of mail, cuirrasses or coracinas, coudes, and genouillères,

¹ Calvert's *Spanish Arms and Armour*.

that is elbow and knee pieces, and some sort of head protection, either a heulme or a bascinet, the former being heavy ; the latter light but useful.

The combatants would enter mounted on their high horses which would be led by body squires. In going into battle, the charger or high horse of the knight was always led by a page or squire, until the moment of actual conflict. The knight then mounted his high or great horse, while the attendant took charge of the mule or temporary steed. This is the origin of the saying, " To get on one's high horse."

These combats were generally arranged to take place under certain conditions and with the use of certain weapons settled beforehand. Thus swords or lances, darts or poignards, or a combination of two or more of these was agreed upon. Any advantage of the ground, which could be made use of by either of the parties to the duel was allowed to be taken. " They might," says Mérimée, " pick up loose stones and fling them at each other," though I think such licence was only allowable in corrupt forms of chivalry. By a further stretching of this point, any arms which might be found lying about the sanded enclosure, could, he says, be also employed. This again could only have been permitted in the debased and estranged chivalry of the Peninsula. Of course, when the Marshal was prejudiced, and when arms were previously secreted in the arena by somebody's orders, the thing was not so much a tournament under the Chivalric code, as a rather mean and spiritless execution.

No sooner had the parties to this fight entered the arena and dismissed their pages, than Lope Nuñez was seen to leap from his horse and run to and fro as if searching for something in the sand. Martin Lopez who, alone of those present, with, we must suppose, the exception of the King, understood the knight's movements, caracoled about the lists, and every time that he passed a certain spot in the sand struck it with his lance. Thither came Lope Nuñez, who, plunging his hands into the soil, drew forth with the necessary amount of pleased surprise, four darts, which we cannot suppose were growing there. He promptly hurled them, one after another at the horse of Arias Baamonte, who, it is to be noticed, had been remarkably quiet and inoffensive all the time. His wounded animal, stung by the pain, carried his master beyond the barriers. This leaving of the ring, although only accidental was always considered as a defeat, and the *alguazils* seized Arias and delivered him up to the executioner to be beheaded on the spot.

For the judgment of God had declared him a traitor.

His brother, Vasco, defended himself valiantly against the two other knights, one of whom attacked on foot, the other on horseback. When, in the course of the combat, he found himself opposite the royal pavilion, he called out to the King: "Sire, is this your justice?" But the King made no answer. Then Vasco raised his voice, and cried out aloud for everyone to hear:—

"Knights of Castile and Leon, lament this sight,

for this day it is suffered in the King's presence that arms should be hidden in the field to slay those who enter it, under the King's assurance to defend their truth, name, and fame."

He then flung himself with renewed and desperate vigour upon his two assailants, with the result that the King, ashamed perhaps of his too-openly expressed partiality, and admiring the courage of the knight, commanded the champions to be separated and declared honour satisfied.

"And all held that this was not well done, for arms hidden and forbidden should not be put in the field, nor should the King, who holds it, show partiality." ¹

¹ Ayala.

CHAPTER XXII

THE DEATHS OF BLANCHE AND MARIA

IN her chamber, in the castle of Jerez, looking out on to the plain through the narrow slit in the masonry that served for a window, was sitting a young woman of twenty-five.

This unfortunate lady had been ten years in prison, and her crime lay in being herself—Blanche, daughter of the Duke of Bourbon and niece of the King of France.

Religion had come to heal wounded pride, and for human love extra-human had been substituted. Probably her room bore evidences of devotion. There would be those numerous epistles of Innocent VI., so full of consolatory sentiments, and yet so empty of consolation ; surely a rosary in the very land of St. Dominic ; perhaps a statue of the saint himself.

An illuminated book of prayers in the mother tongue brought from France, we may imagine, and, without doubt, the indefinable, vague, and elusive perfume of melancholy. The ghosts of many sighs and the wraiths of pale hours, of quiet and hopeless resignation that mediæval symbolism would picture as a crown of thorns wrestling with the frail, unused, gold filagree of a crown.

In different mood, however, did a certain Iñigo

Ortiz de Estuñiga, the castellan of this fortress and prison of Jerez, receive some orders from his king this same day in the year 1361.

Iñigo, like the rest of the countryside, held his gentle prisoner for a saint, and the sight of her white face and golden hair up in her apartment or at the daily mass gave him confidence in the happiness to be found in the next world and a tender pity for the inspirer of this idea in this.

The Andalusian peasants loved and honoured Blanche as a saint and a queen, and the thought of her unhappy life made them, at times, very bold towards their young sovereign.

It is told of a certain shepherd, who one day saw Don Pedro while he was engaged in hawking near the castle of Jerez, that he addressed the King on the subject of his marital infidelities.

He was, as a peasant, naturally familiar and democratic, like all sons of the soil—your bourgeois is ever a town-bred fellow—and his lady of the castle was a saint, who had been hardly and wickedly treated.

“Sire,” he said boldly to the King, with an assumption of inspiration which bestowers of good counsel are always ready to adopt, “God sends me to announce to you that you will one day have to render account for your treatment of Queen Blanche; but rest assured, that if you return to her, as is your duty, she will bear you a son, who shall inherit your kingdom.”

A daring enough speech for anyone, when Pedro's

manner towards prophets is remembered. This one the King thought to be merely a messenger from Blanche, acting in a rather cryptic fashion. He had him arrested, and gave orders that he should be taken to the castle and confronted with the Queen, that he might see if his suspicions were justified.

Blanche was found in her oratory, on her knees before an image, in complete ignorance of the doings of the countryside beyond her prison.

The shepherd prophet was set at liberty.

And so on this other morning, when the message of the King's ill intention came to Jerez, may we think of poor Blanche in her oratory, burning the flame of her life in prayer, turning the warmth of love into the white, lifeless, crystals of extra-human longings, etiolate and wistful as her own name.

Now Iñigo Ortiz de Estuñiga was a good man, and poisoning his royal lady was not a task to his liking. He sent back a reply to Don Pedro, that as long as the castle was under his command, no harm should come to the fair lady who resided there.

"She was his lady," he declared, "and it were treason in him to consent to her death."¹

Don Pedro had Iñigo removed, and gave the custody of the place to a simple *ballestero*, who would not be likely to be troubled with knightly scruples or a conscience of pity.

This was one Perez de Rebolledo, and his installation as castellan was immediately followed by Blanche's death.

¹ Ayala, 1361, Cap. III.

Nobody accuses her of having killed anybody. In legend and in chronicle, she is portrayed as an excellent and charming woman.

She left three daughters, and a son who did not long survive his mother. At her death, masses were said at many altars all over Spain for the repose of her soul. So did her un-Christian lord furnish her obsequies with most Christian and princely favours.

CHAPTER XXIII

OF SOME FAVOURITES OF PETER AND THE
END OF DON FERNANDO

SEVERAL events of importance had happened in Europe, while Don Pedro was warring with his neighbours and losing his relations and friends by the executioner's axe or by natural death.

Innocent VI. died and was replaced by Urban V. King John of France died in London, and was succeeded by Charles V.

England and France were at peace, and those two Paladins of the time, those two great fighters, the Black Prince and Bertrand du Guesclin, were therefore at peace as well.

The time was not yet when they were to burst into Castile and scatter the Spaniards before their powerful companies; the one fighting for Don Pedro, the other for the Conde de Trastamara.

The hour of Pedro's downfall had not yet come: a few more nobles had to perish, terror had to become still more widely-spread in the land, a further harvest of heads had yet to fill death's trenches, dug so deep through all Castile.

Fadrique and Juan the Infante of Aragon, Doña Leonor de Guzman, Blanche perhaps—all that host

of the murdered were to be avenged, but not for a little while.

In a general Cortes, held at Seville before the three orders of the land, the King had solemnly asserted the fact and the validity of his marriage with Doña Maria de Padilla.

Blanche had never been, could not possibly have been, according to him, his legitimate spouse. He had, he declared to his complaisant Parliament, already contracted a secret marriage with Maria before the solemnisation of his nuptials with the French princess. He maintained, that, owing to the unsettled state of his kingdom, he had not been able to declare this fact before.

To verify this declaration and in support of its truth, he adduced, he said, four witnesses, one of whom was, however, dead—namely Juan de Henestrosa. The others, Diego de Padilla, Alonso de Mayorja, the keeper of the Great Seal, and Juan Perez de Orduna, his chaplain, swore to the truth of the fact.

As a result of this declaration, the legitimacy of the King's children by Maria was also established.

Though, on the face of it, this declaration looks fraudulent enough, it is not quite certain that there was no marriage between Don Pedro and the Padilla. In his will the declaration was repeated with all due solemnity, and Mariana says that Pedro's witnesses are all men of character, without taint or suspicion.

On the other hand, Don Pedro had already found people willing enough to perjure themselves on the question of his marital position in the case of Juana

de Castro. The incident is one of several in the King's life which must for the present remain a mystery, must so remain until that alleged history (supposedly lost) giving his life from the point of view which regards him as *el Justiciero* is found.¹

The King, on receiving the sanction of his Cortes for this declaration of his, spoke to them of that far rumour of war, whose echoes were being carried over the Pyrenees into Castile.

The famous White Company was marauding in France; some of its advance guard and scouts had, indeed, already dribbled into Spain with the avowed intention of fighting as good Christians against the Moslems of Granada. On the Aragonese frontier, it had already been necessary on occasions to call the people to arms to thrust back these impertinent adventurers. The moment was coming when Don Pedro should find in these same men a host of personal enemies ready to drag him from his throne. The Cortes, sensible in this matter, perhaps, of its own danger, complied with the King's request for men-at-arms, and a considerable force was placed upon the borders of Aragon and Navarre to receive the invaders.

Though there was no imminent danger to be feared from these freebooters, who would not turn their attention to Spain until they had exhausted the possibilities of France, Don Pedro perceived an opportunity in the rumours of their coming for the satisfaction of his revenge against the King of Aragon.

¹ See Ledo del Pozo: *Apologia del Rey Don Pedro*; and the Conde de la Roca.

Peace had been made between the two lands, we know, but peace only of a sort. It was more a resting time for the needs of war than its death. And Don Pedro's anger still burned strong in him against his namesake of Aragon.

So he determined to trade on the fears and reports of foreign invasion to inveigle the King of Navarre into an alliance, offensive and defensive, against Pedro IV.

It would be against the lands of Navarre that the Free Companies would come first of all, if come they should.

Navarre's castles and pastures would be the first of those of the whole Peninsula to sustain the attack of these lawless invaders. Their audacity and unscrupulousness were notorious; their greed, lust, and impiety a matter of common talk. The Conde de Trastamara, who was with them, provided an excellent guide and excuse for their irruption into Spain.

Being well assured that King Carlos of Navarre was aware of all these matters, Don Pedro sent him ambassadors to propose a treaty between Castile and Navarre, ostensibly, though not by designation, for the purpose of their mutual safety against the Free Companies. Ignorant of his would-be ally's true intent, and imagining himself only the gainer in an alliance of his small kingdom with the greater one of Castile, Carlos the Bad readily enough subscribed to all the clauses in the proposed treaty.

He went to Soria on the Castilian border, and was there treated with magnificent hospitality and

courtesy, so that he became proud of his newly-acquired dignity and importance.

A clause characteristic of Don Pedro's cruelty and unforgivingness, which we may notice, is one providing for the mutual extradition of emigrants and refugees.

Don Pedro never lost an opportunity for revenge.

Another reason which made King Carlos ready to engage himself to the King of Castile, was the expectation and dread with which he looked for a war with France, with whose king he had had a personal quarrel.

But Don Pedro did not keep him long in suspense on the question of whom it was that they were to attack.

The gospels were hardly put away from the touch of their hands ; their vows and promises were scarcely dry upon the paper, when Peter the Cruel showed his ally how completely he had deceived him.

He took him by the arm, away from the writing table, and the holy books, and the clerics, and told him his intentions.

There were a few nobles of both countries present, when Don Pedro made his declaration to King Carlos. We may imagine the Castilians smiling to themselves at the superior cunning of their young monarch ; the Navarrese graybeards disgusted and furious at being so outwitted.

" Brother king," began Don Pedro, smoothly enough, " you and I have just sworn that the first of us who shall go to war should have the assistance of his ally.

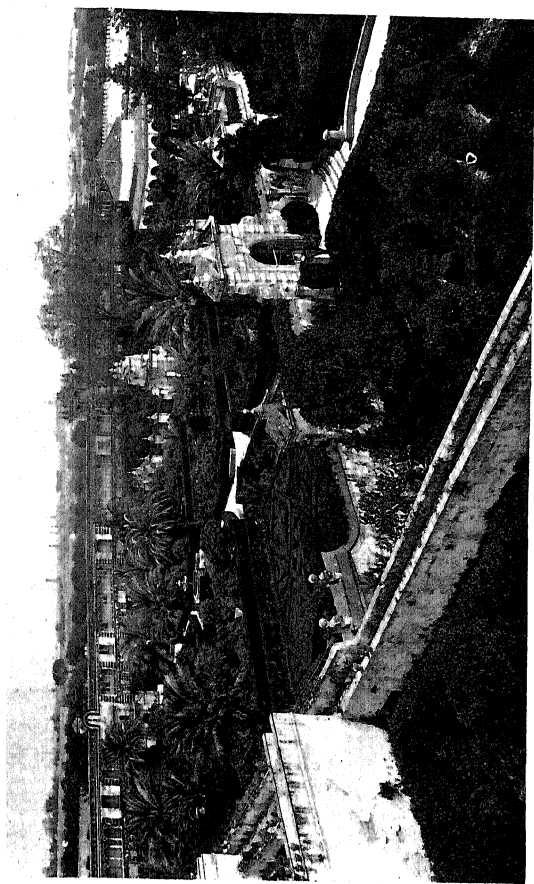
Know then that this very day I call upon you to carry out your promise. You are aware that it was against my will that I made peace with the King of Aragon. When attacked by Abu Said, the usurper of Granada, I was forced to consent to a truce with the Aragonese, so that Andalusia might be saved from the ravages of the Moors, who were only waiting to invade it. This peace has cost me dear, for I have had to restore many cities and castles won by my arms. However, I am going to attack them. I have determined to indemnify myself for all that this dishonourable war has cost me, and I expect you to be faithful to your oath and to aid me in this enterprise, both with your arms and body."

Thus did Pedro, almost at the sword's point, demand fulfilment of the treaty obtained from the King of Navarre by a ruse.

Poor Carlos, thus pricked into hostility against his will, and not knowing whether an attitude of war or one of peace would be the more unfortunate for him, received Don Pedro's demand with much consternation.

He did not dare, however, refuse to carry out his part of the newly-signed treaty, so, with the best grace he could find, he accepted the situation.

Less determined, more subtle, politic, and civilised than Don Pedro, he sought for a pretext, however frivolous, before declaring his hostility to the King of Aragon. Such he found in the fact, related by his herald to Pedro IV., that when he (Carlos) had been the prisoner of the King of France, he had vainly besought aid from the King of Aragon. "Who, by his



VIEW OF THE ALCAZAR GARDENS, SEVILLE (PRESENT TIME)

breach of faith, had thus dissolved his alliance with Navarre."

Don Pedro of Castile, on his part, cared nothing for such formalities and pieces of etiquette. He was never a schemer for the sake of appearances; his diplomacy went always for the object in view itself, caring little or nothing for the manner and means.

Thus, in his treatment of King Carlos of Navarre, Don Pedro's susceptibilities were not in the least shocked by the abrupt and crude change of front. He wanted to gain his purpose, and did not trouble to swathe his actions or words in any comfortable formula of hypocrisy. If he was determined to play the wolf, he saw no use for a sheep's skin.

Wasting no time, he promptly invaded Aragon, and captured several unimportant towns. Then his army was brought to a standstill before Calatayud, a city of resolute and determined burghers.

After it had maintained an obstinate resistance, it was captured.

He then returned for a while to his beloved Seville, where a certain Isabella was consoling him for the loss of Maria.

This Isabella was a woman of the palace, a bed-chamber woman, one of those who waited on the King's son, Alfonso, whom he had had by the Padilla.

The King had also from this time until his death several other mistresses, four of whom he mentions in his will. He was inspired to make this testament by the death from plague of his son Alfonso, an event

which almost immediately followed his return from the battlefield to the capital.

Don Pedro was very sorrowful and afflicted by this death. His son died, we learn, in his arms, and the little hand for which he had been striving to prepare so great a sceptre and so wide a power, lay helplessly in his own.

This moment marks his apogee, and the beginning of his decline.

His enemy, Innocent VI., was dead ; his inveterate foe of Aragon was humbled and abased ; his disloyal brothers were killed, reduced to submission, or able to scandalise him only beyond the Pyrenees and among strangers. He was completely powerful at home, servilely obeyed, and dreadfully feared. He had ambitions, easy enough dreams of self-aggrandisement.

In this will of his, he nominates his daughter Beatriz to the succession, and commands that she shall marry the Infante of Portugal. Thus were the two kingdoms to be united, and, with Aragon perhaps conquered by his arms during his life, and Navarre hoodwinked once more, the idea of a united Spain was not so far away. Women, who were never exiled from his thoughts, appear plentifully enough in his will. To four ladies he gave legacies, provided that they retired into convents and took the vow after his death. We know little or nothing of these women, beyond their names, and the fact that the King favoured them. Their descriptions, ages, manners, families—of these we know nothing. They occupied his affections or satisfied his lust for a time, and he thought enough of them to

leave them 1000 Castilian doubloons, provided that they were content to mourn his memory for ever after. To Maria Ortiz, sister of Juan de San Juan, he left 2000 doubloons, so that one may think he must have liked her better than the other three, better than Maria Aldonza, Juana Garcia, or Uracca Carillo. This latter lady was the daughter of Pero Carillo, and therefore a person of noble birth. With Carillo himself these pages are twice again concerned before he meets a death quite appropriate to his character.

Of these four women whom the King invested with legacies, Mérimée remarks that not one of them is graced in the will with the courtesy title of Doña. He assumes from this that therefore their parentage was not illustrious, an assumption hardly borne out by the facts, since one of them, Doña Uracca, was the niece of Garci Laso and the daughter of Pero Carillo, while another bore the name of de Sotomayor, a noble Spanish patronymic. The King's connection with them must have been of some duration and extent for him to have thus recorded it in his testament, which is in every respect a document wherein he takes himself very seriously. Even with these ladies we do not arrive at the full total of his amours, if there is any credit in the rumours and legends concerning him and them.

In this will of his, an interpolator or forger has been at work, and the parchment, according to Zurita, bears evidence of the pen-knife in a certain place where reference is made to the succession of a certain natural son of the King, who was to inherit

after the failure of his legitimate daughters. What the original name was is a mystery which has received suggested solutions at various hands. The name super-imposed over the erasure is that of Don Juan, the son whom Pedro is thought to have had by Juana de Castro. The very existence of this person is doubtful, however. According to Señor Llaguno, the original name was that of Don Fernando, a son of Maria de Henestrosa, whose intimacy with Don Pedro the old chronicler relates. Don Pedro was not satisfied with settling his succession in his testament. He called together a Cortes at Bubierca, a town not even in the territory of Castile, but lying in Aragon.

Here he asked his assembly to ratify with all due solemnity the clauses in his will which concerned the future of the Castilian Crown. He also insisted that all the deputies present should sign a document attesting their endorsement of his wishes.

In the intensity and earnestness with which he directed himself to this business, it is perhaps possible to see an indication that Don Pedro had lost confidence to some degree in himself and his destiny. A little later we find him indulging in melancholy vaticination as to his future; dealing shamefacedly with prophets; trafficking like a regular stage king in omens and dreams.

On the occasion of the meeting of the Cortes at Bubierca, he did not lose the chance of once more publicly proclaiming his anger and hatred against his disloyal or disaffected *Ricos Hombres* and knights. He issued a formidable list of proscribed persons to the

deputies, and asked their approval of the document, which they did not dare to withhold.

Although Don Pedro had the key to the whole situation of the Peninsula in his hands, a certain vacillation and lack of self-confidence, hitherto strange to him, seems now to have troubled his will.

His power in Castile was paramount : all the most dangerous of his nobles were dead or living in impotent exile ; his allies were encouraged, strong, and ready for his word.

The Infante Luis de Navarre and the famous Captal de Buch had rejoined his standard. Even Navarre's own king, forced into this partnership of war, found himself making conquests almost against his will.

The King of Granada also supplied him with a famous captain, Don Farax, and six hundred Granadine genetours. These, by Don Pedro's orders, were to carry on " a cruel war," that is a vindictive war, in which no quarter was to be granted to the enemy. Capture meant beheading.

Yet, though he himself led his soldiers towards Valencia, there does not seem to have been any unifying idea in all this expression of anger and military power thus deployed and displayed on the Peninsula.

The conduct of the war was bloodthirsty in the extreme, and Don Pedro, perched up in a convent on the heights of some mountains, beheld " crops blazing, vines torn up, trees cut down, hamlets set on fire, and farms demolished." A sight to please his cruel majesty, whose strange self-love required a perpetual sacrifice of blood performed before it.

While the opposing forces were drawing together for a conclusive battle in the neighbourhood of Murviedo, the Abbé de Fécamp, who was now charged with the office of papal peace-maker to the Peninsula, sought to effect a compromise between the warring kings, which should determine the unhappy state of their respective countries.

The widowerhood of Don Pedro was a lever with which the peace party in Castile and Aragon hoped to turn events to their own ends.

An alliance had already for some time been suggested between Don Pedro and a princess of Aragon. This scheme was revived, and its advantages urged on the royal widower, whose loneliness was of course being then assuaged by the charms of several unofficial consorts.

The Castilian monarch's suggested bride was the Infanta Juana, and Don Pedro seems to have considered the alliance to the extent of demanding that, as a condition of it, his brother the Conde and the Infante Don Fernando should be executed. This attitude provoked a not unnatural protest from the prospective father-in-law, which was further increased by his knowledge of the fact that Doña Isabella, the woman of the chamber, was being treated at the court of Seville as a queen.

Extraordinary honours were being paid to her ; the dignities and apartments of Maria were at her service ; bishops were commanded to form a part of her retinue.

While Castile and Aragon were thus jealously

considering the price at which a peace might be obtained, the two young princes of Don Pedro's especial detestation were engaged in quarrelling with each other. They were secretly urging their respective claims to the throne of Castile, a throne as yet securely enough occupied by its monarch. With Pedro IV. they spent time in parcelling out the domains which they were going to wrest from Pedro. Among three conspirators, there is often one who is the object of a yet closer and more intimate conspiracy, one who is despised or hated or feared by the other two. So it was in this case.

The Infante Don Fernando was not popular, and Don Enrique was. The Conde's charm of manner and his gentle ways are spoken of in all the chronicles of the time—Spanish, French, and English. In the old rhyming chronicle of Du Guesclin, his popularity at the French Court is pointedly remarked. As for the Infante Don Fernando, he represented a possible rival to his brother, Pedro IV., and a still more immediate one to the Conde. To the throne of Castile his title was superior from the point of inheritance. Thus, in the resulting proportion, he stood to be wiped out as a useless common factor, if the interests of the other members' things leant that way. A sign of the coming ill fortune against this prince was shown in the proclamation issued by Pedro IV., forbidding anyone but the Conde to recruit in France.

The Infante had, however, his supporters, among whom it is rather curious to find those colourless

princes Don Tello and Don Sancho. These, with several Castilian knights, definitely ranged themselves under the banner of the Aragonese Prince.

The Infante Don Fernando, who had some character, was guilty at Zaragossa of an act which earned for him the bitter enmity of his royal brother. In his town the troops were so clamorous for their pay, and the prince so wearied with his own incessant excuses to them, that he stormed the house of the King's treasurer, and, breaking open the coffers with an axe, scattered their gold among the greedy soldiers. This act of authority, though it retained the wavering loyalty of the Aragonese troops, found no favour with the owner of the coffers. Its perpetration led to plot and counter-plot between the King, Fernando, and Enrique. Their short-lived brotherhood of arms was disappearing in a cloud of angry quarrels and treacherous double-dealing.

The Infante, disgusted with the turn things had taken, decided to offer his sword to the King of France. Pedro IV. begged his brother to remain, and sent him a herald to invite him to a meeting. This took place at Castellon on the 10th July, when the Spanish summer is at its fiercest.

Pedro IV. received his brother with open arms, and made him extremely welcome with the wine of his household and the affection of his heart.

After the meal, which the brothers had shared in all amity and happiness, Don Fernando retired to take a siesta. Over the princely slumber there watched four knights, a bodyguard indicative of

the amount of trust which the great ones of the earth of those times reposed in each other's hospitality.

One of these caballeros was the Castilian, Diego Perez Sarmiento, who had narrowly escaped the wrath of Peter the Cruel.

It would seem that Sarmiento and his companions, as well as the prince himself, must have slumbered a little in the overheated chamber on this burning afternoon of July. For, when suddenly an alguazil of the Court came to the little group of men, he was able to awake Don Fernando without any protest from his bodyguard.

"In the King's name you are my prisoner!" he said.

"Prisoner!" shouted the prince, still sleepy and heavy. "Who dares arrest men of my rank?"

Embarrassed at the Prince's firm attitude, the official returned to Pedro IV. and related his words. But in a little space he was back again, and there was a tramping of armed men to be heard in the palace.

"'There is no dishonour in such an arrest,' says the King," was the message of the alguazil.

To this, Sarmiento, to whom the real meaning of the affair was now clear, replied by drawing his sword.

"Better to die sword in hand than surrender," he said, with perhaps a recollection of Don Fadrique's end, at which he had assisted.

The alguazil at these words fled and left the Infante, and the other knights drew their swords and prepared

to put their five bodies between their honour and death.

With what furniture they could lay hands on, they quickly barricaded the apartment. Behind this little defence the five swords bristled like a hedge of steel. While all the palace was in confusion, they waited, wondering from what direction the first attack would come. The voice of Don Enrique calling his men to the assault must have sounded ominously in Don Fernando's ears.

The door was locked and secure, but the defenders soon heard the Conde's men struggling to break it open. And in the ceiling of the room above holes were being bored, so that destruction might be rained down on the five tethered victims below.

So far, it was only noise that had troubled them, but such an ominous, engulfing noise that the Infante could bear the tension no longer.

He opened the door of the room and flung himself, sword in hand, on the assailants outside. To his aid there rushed, staunchly enough, Sarmiento and the other Castilian; but the two Aragonese knights climbed out of the window and escaped. Almost the first face that the Infante Fernando saw among the men outside the room was that of the Conde himself. Mad with despair, and furious at this treachery, Don Fernando sprang upon him with passion. A squire of the Conde was just in time to proffer his body for the sword-thrust meant for his lord. So furious and delirious was the onslaught of these three caged men fighting for their lives against

this mass of swords, that the attackers were momentarily driven back from the door. But the men outside were all in steel, and the defenders were unprotected by armour. For a little while, the bravery lasted. Cut and thrust, and thrust and parry, till the quick eye of that tremendous servant, Pero Carillo, caught the Infante at a momentary disadvantage. Under his guard slipped the sword, and the right arm, drained of its strength, fell limp and helpless.

There were some scores of men at the door ; in the room, only three, so that all was soon over.

CHAPTER XXIV

“ THE FOOD OF HEROES ”

SPEAKING of the knight-errants, La Curne de Sainte-Palaye says in his *Memoirs of Ancient Chivalry* that they lived mostly in forests, that their food consisted almost entirely of venison, and that the following was the method they employed to prepare it.

There were, he says, placed in the forests and wild places large, flat stones to assist these knights in their culinary operations. Who provided them he does not make clear. Probably the earliest knight-errants gathered and left them for their descendants ; perhaps a government anxious to encourage romance saw to their disposition. The buck or kid which they had killed was placed on one of these large, flat stones, covered with another, and its blood squeezed out. The result was called Pressed Kid : Food of Heroes.¹

What romantics !

A mind that can turn an unpleasant mess such as is described above into a food of heroes may compass much on its journeyings ? The gnarled and lumpy oaks will all be giants or monsters, Phyllis of the Inn, a princess strayed into Arcadia ; the

¹ Ste Palaye.

indifferent sherry, Imperial Tokay. The comrade-in-arms will be a Cœur de Lion, a Du Guesclin, a Black Prince or the sourest villain unhung, just as may be.

Surely a heart that could deal in magic like that was worth having—at any rate for a year and a day. For such a length of time it usually was that these young knights gave to their missions.

One morning when his accolade still lay lightly on his shoulders, a sudden passion of romance would perhaps seize the young knight. There was no wonder in the world at home: beauty, love, glory, life, lay on the other side of yonder forest; his youth chafed in this indignity of comfortable idleness. It is always thus: at twenty-four or so, life is always on the other side of the forest, in the streets that we do not know, in the houses to which we are not invited, houses whose curtains tempt us like the drooping lids of beautiful strangers. And so the liege lord was approached; the vows made, and for a year and a day¹ one became pledged to go bustling through the world as an amateur providence, righting the wrong, succouring beauty in distress, being a true, loyal, and gentle knight for 366 days, without taking a single, cynical, reflective breath. What did these young gentlemen do when the partings were said, and the parental drawbridge had fallen back into its place again? They fought; they made love; by their camp fires in the hearts of the great forests which stretched over Europe they entertained themselves at night with song and story.

¹ Ste. Palaye.

They sang to the firs, and the oaks, and the stars, the tapestry-like old airs of troubadours such as Arnaud Daniel or Geoffroi Rudel.

And when they were hungry, they ate, as we have seen, Pressed Kid : the Food of Heroes.

Now, of course, when they grew older, a comfortable cynicism replaced that romance of theirs.

Food of Heroes is all very well in its way, when one is twenty-four and more than a trifle foolish, but there is so much in a man that is not heroic and yet requires feeding too.

Easily enough, we may believe the romantics became the practicals. A lesson or two in the business of plunder and rapine showed them the real advantages of knighthood as compared with its sentimental ones. The gold of burghers, their fat and succulent beeves, all served to turn romantic knight-errants into extremely sensible and hard-headed fellows like Du Guesclin. Of such a class were his own soldiers. Few of them were in their first youth. They were experienced fighters, old campaigners, shaped into professional style on the plains of Normandy and Aquitaine. No Pressed Kid for them, no Hero's Food, so long as there was a farm to be sacked, or a vineyard to be broken into.

All the chroniclers of the time agree in calling these knights of the Free Companies very bad names. They are freebooters, ruffians, thieves, pirates, desperadoes, and intolerable nuisances.

In the prose Chronicle of Du Guesclin it is said that :—

"There were then in France certain folk of various countries, who during the wars had taken the part of England. They occupied fortresses, destroyed many towns and castles, and committed pillage generally. These folk called themselves *Les Grandes Compagnies*. King Edward," adds the chronicler, "secretly supported them."

We learn that they "cut off the arms and gouged out the eyes of poor people." Most of the nationalities of Europe had representatives among them, but the greater part were from England, Gascony, and Brittany.

Famous captains among them were the Captal de Buch, the Comte de Foix (Froissart's friend and travelling companion), Sir Hugh de Calverley, Robert Scot, the Green Knight, Gutier Huet, Matthieu de Gournay, and as Generalissimo in the advance into Spain, the famous and redoubtable Bertrand du Guesclin. They were all of them excellent fighters, hardened in many a campaign, but their presence in France was an intolerable nuisance to everybody. Various plans to draw them away into some other country were tried, but these tumultuous warriors preferred the fat, rich France they knew to the Eldorados of which they had only heard. The King of Hungary wished to employ these gentry against the Turks, and made them an offer in return for their assistance through the medium of some of their captains. He went to Pope Urban V. at Avignon to ask his influence in the affair. But the freebooters were all against travelling so far. In their ignorance,

they drew pictures for one another of a terrible land, full of difficulties and terrors, and so far away, that if they should ever reach it, they would certainly never return. These, then, were the men who were soon to come into Spain. Already Don Enrique, in a tentative way, had urged that they should be invited. He knew them; was sure of them. In their forces were those with whom he had fought, as well as those who had from time to time been matched against him. In some measure, the Conde was a cosmopolitan. He had lived in Paris, then the heart of such civilisation as Europe possessed. He knew that for these doughty fighters the levies of Castile would be no match.

But, for the present, his suggestions were unfavourably received by his allies.

"Why purchase foreigners' services at so dear a rate," they asked, "whilst our own troops are so poorly recompensed?"

So the matter stood for a little while, and Don Enrique, Carlos the Bad, and Pedro began a series of secret intrigues and understandings with one another.

The King of Navarre, whom we have seen forced into an unwilling hostility by Don Pedro of Castile, was now approached by the King of Aragon with a view to the purchase of the neutrality of his army.

Enrique de Trastamara is thought to have organised this piece of diplomacy, and the two knights met "with much mystery" on the 20th August in the castle of Uncastillo.

It was then arranged that Don Carlos should receive a certain sum of money in return for his services, and that a further amount of 200,000 florins would be paid to him if he should deliver up, dead or alive, Don Pedro of Castile.

Very elaborate precautions were taken by the plotters to prevent this arrangement becoming known to their common enemy of Castile. The matter of hostages and surrendered castles was so devised as to remain temporarily incomplete in order that Don Pedro might suspect nothing.

It was also settled that the Infante Luis de Navarre¹ should allow himself to be surprised by Don Enrique, who would appear to take him as a prisoner of war, though really he would be a hostage already agreed on.

Though Don Enrique was cognizant of all the clauses in the treaty between the two kings, they entered into a few further articles of agreement as between themselves and against him of which he was kept entirely in ignorance.

The whole of the affair was a very remarkable piece of double dealing and entangled intrigue, and goes to show that only a king with a cool and business-like head could hope to retain his kingdom long in the Europe of those days.

The result of these various councils was further war. The petty foraging and pillaging parties were changed into small armies. Don Pedro, suspicious of new

¹ This person led a very adventurous life and was, according to Froissart, married to the famous Joan of Naples.

treachery, launched his troops at the Murcian frontier, and took the towns of Elche and Alicante.

He put a new fleet into commission, and relinquished his decorative and architectural improvements of the Alcazar of Seville, in order to lead his troops in person.

As usual, he swore, and, when the chance offered, took a terrible vengeance on his enemies. His soldiers were in the main successful against those of Aragon and Navarre. It is probable that Don Pedro was a good leader of men, if no great tactician, for we find in the history of these times that he was generally able to claim the victory in encounters where the odds were tolerably even. The King of Aragon was rather frightened at the success of Don Pedro's forces, while the Conde saw in it an opportunity to magnify his own importance in the Peninsula.

There followed on the 10th of October, 1363, a new treaty by which the Conde sought to improve his position in the eventual dismemberment of Castile, to which he and his so-called friends looked forward.

This document again was further complicated by all those evidences of bad faith and mutual distrust, which were so much part and parcel of any treaty or document as to make one wonder why these fourteenth century diplomatists wasted their time on such futile scribblings at all.

Meanwhile Peter the Cruel was generally victorious in his encounters with these half-hearted allies, and, but for the general hatred of himself which his misdeeds had emplanted in his nobles' hearts, might

have brought Aragon, Navarre, and his brother Henry to complete submission.

But he was feared and hated by the men whose aid was most necessary to his success.

And over the Pyrenees were those knights of the Great Companies, only awaiting an invitation to descend into Spain.

These men were not treaty-makers and treaty-breakers. They were fighters who rarely engaged in diplomacy, not diplomats who occasionally fought.

Du Guesclin was a prisoner in the hands of John Chandos, but was later ransomed for a large sum.

The battles of Auray and Cocherel had thrown many good knights as prisoners into their enemies' hands. But from time to time nearly all were ransomed. And so they gathered together again in Languedoc where they lived in great style. The time for their descent into Castile was not yet, but it was quickly approaching.

If the natural food of heroes was sometimes Pressed Kid, it is certain that the heroes of all time have ever replenished their spirits on the subtle ambrosia of honour. Chivalry was very exacting in the private relations of life, and the most blackguardly publicist seems often to have been a Cato in the justice of things intimate.

Don Enrique, who broke and made treaties as lightly as may be, was capable of executing the most clear-cut justice where his private honour was touched.

This is the story of the love of Pero Carillo, Pero, pilot of wandering princes and princesses in distress, rescuer of high-born dames, faithfulest servant in an age of almost universal infidelity.

In the early days of Pedro's reign when the world was young for a young king, and the beacon of his majesty and power was not yet fully ablaze in the land of Castile, a certain Ferdinand de Castro married, it may be remembered, much to Don Pedro's chagrin, a certain Doña Juana, the sister of the Conde.

Don Enrique himself gave her away, and the marriage was celebrated with some magnificence.

Had we been there we should have seen the estimable mayor-Domo of the bastard prince watching with more than natural interest the scene. For it was here that Carillo loved. No woman of low degree for him ; nothing less than a princess of the blood royal.

Carillo, we must think, disguised his affection in those days, and we cannot tell whether Juana loved Ferdinand as truly as he loved her. Soon after this alliance, however, we know that the marriage was declared dissolved by Don Pedro on his return to freedom, and the lady went into Aragon to share the wanderings of her brother Henry.

Then it was that Pero found his opportunity.

It is to be regretted that the charming French habit of writing memoirs when one has something worth remembering was not yet common in the less cultured land of Spain. Had we the story of the lady Juana from her own hand, it would make interesting material for this narrative of old Castile.

In the wall of solid facts, which the grave annalists oppose to a frivolous curiosity, there are hardly any chinks through which one may peep at this old romantic tapestry.

We are only able to judge the story by its end, and to be pretty sure of Pero's good fortune by the price he paid for it.

According to Mérimée, “she received his attentions with pleasure” and “distinguished the knight” by her society.

We may feel fairly certain that Pero was a man not without charm, as we know he was certainly not without experience. There was that romantic ride through Spain with the Conde and Condessa at Don Pedro's accession, and the famous rescue of the same lady a little later. Pero, no doubt, had learnt something of gallantry in Paris, where he must certainly have accompanied his master. Altogether, he probably made a very charming substitute for Ferdinand.

It had been said that there was a secret marriage. But be that as it may, love must always tread warily in high places, and the favoured of noble ladies have very often paid with their lives for their presumption. There were Cleopatra, Messalina, Catherine of Russia, and the occupant of the Tour de Nesle, not to mention the princesses of the Eastern fairy tales.

These ladies sullied their honour on one day and revenged it on the next, or even earlier, but Pero's end was compassed by an indignant brother, not by the lady herself.

"A secret injury requires a secret revenge," is a Spanish proverb which Mérimée quotes.

And on a certain hawking expedition, Don Enrique drew Pero Carillo aside from the others into a retired spot, and slew him with his javelin.

Such a deed was strictly just according to the laws of chivalry. If Carillo and Henry had been equals, a joust would perhaps have decided the matter.

Thus honour, that necessary theoretical counterpoise to life as it was lived at this time, received its tribute.

CHAPTER XXV

KING FAINT-HEART

AND all the while in Valencia Don Pedro was burning, pillaging, sacking and putting to the sword. Sieges were his especial delight ; pitched battles he avoided, and in this choice he was followed by his enemies.

From now until the end Don Pedro presents, it must be admitted, a rather poor figure. He runs away from the foe unless the odds are largely on his side ; he neglects opportunities of striking blows, which a little daring would have made very deadly ; he confines himself to a disreputable brigandage unworthy of a king. Of course he was sick at heart, faint at heart, at this time, for the power built upon fear was showing him the weakness of its miserable foundation. All those dead heads, rotting in the soil of Castile, were crying softly from their resting-places against the hour of vengeance. The hearts of the relicts of his murdered ones treasured an instinctive treachery against the King. Pedro felt these things, and from this time he becomes like a man whose soul is ridden with ghosts.

Doubts prey on his will and resolution, and he goes inert against his foes.

To his knights at the table he said one day, as he

put a morsel of bread into his mouth : “ With this piece of bread I could feed all the loyal subjects I have throughout Castile.”

With a little of his old vigour, he could have made himself master of the Peninsula. He was a better general than any of his foes, better than Enrique, better than Carlos, the debauchee of Navarre, better than the tyrant of Aragon.

When Don Pedro's army was besieging Valencia, unknown to him, Pedro IV. set on foot a relief expedition. This force would have fallen on the Castilians unaware, but for Don Tello, who sent a squire of his to warn his brother. Don Tello, like everybody else played a double game, and, while fighting in the Conde's army, secretly corresponded with the King. The sight of the mountain-tops bursting into smoke persuaded Don Pedro that his brother's messenger brought tidings of truth, and, losing no time, he forthwith raised the siege. He established himself in an advantageous position near Murviedo, on some neighbouring heights. Although the King of Aragon invited battle, Don Pedro remained where he was, and allowed the enemy to go to the relief of Valencia. Even when they were at the disadvantage of crossing a river, the King did not hasten to attack, but merely annoyed them temporarily with a few genetours whose arrows and javelins were harmless against the mail of the Aragonese soldiers.

The arrival of Pedro IV. and his relieving host was marked with great delight by the Valencians, tortured and unstrung by all the privations of a siege. They

pressed round the King, kissing his hands, his armour, and even the very accoutrements of his horse. Mérimée thinks that Don Pedro's inaction in this case must be put down to the non-arrival of his fleet in which he reposed a warmer confidence than in his army. His naval captains were mostly aliens who had no private wrongs to clash with their sense of professional duty. Pedro was not above seeking to throw the blame of the fiasco of Murviedo on the King of Aragon. He complained that he could not force him to a battle.

"He makes war like an Almogavar," he said, implying by the word a low type of Arabian guerilla warrior, whose principal military skill lay in his remarkable elusiveness from pursuit.

The King of Aragon replied to this by challenging Don Pedro to a pitched battle, on a given day in an open plain—a challenge which the King of Castile completely ignored.

When his fleet at length arrived, Don Pedro embarked in person, and proceeded to engage in a series of skirmishes and manœuvres, which had little or no result. Both sides watched each other's movements very warily, but nothing in the way of an engagement occurred.

Then suddenly a storm arose, and the principal galley in which Don Pedro was sailing lost its anchor three times, and drifted dangerously near to the enemy's coast. Fortunately for those on board, the fourth anchor held, but the vessel was so near the shore that Don Pedro could remark the fetters which were

being prepared for him by those waiting on the beach. He was in great fear, and vowed to God and the saints, that if he should escape from the tempest, he would go forthwith on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady del Puch, a holy place near by.

And he kept his word.

When the storm went down, and he was enabled to return to Murviedo, he solemnly repaired to the church of del Puch, where, in his shirt, bare-footed, and with a rope round his neck, he gave thanks to God for his safety.

Is not this a different Pedro from the priest-burner, the sceptic, the excommunicate, of a few years ago ?

After a short visit to Seville, to divert his mind with the decorations of the Alcazar which were then in progress, he continued the type of war which is so characteristic of the country and the age: fruitless sieges, brutal pillagings and burnings, the concentration of large forces on totally disproportionate objectives. Yet where his troops did meet those of the Conde and the King of Aragon, they were generally the victors.

The Castilians established themselves outside the city of Orihuela, an important point in Valencia, and before this place Don Pedro once more declined to accept a pitched battle which the enemy sought to force on him. In the council of war which was held, he asked his nobles' opinion: "Ought we to attack?" he said to his knights assembled round him. A silence followed, and all turned towards Diego de Padilla, Master of Calatrava, whose advice they felt would echo their own.

“Sire,” said Padilla, “it is a long time since God gave to the House of Castile and the House of Aragon their appointed shares, and if Castile were now divided into four parts, one alone of those quarters would constitute a kingdom larger than the whole of Aragon. You, as lord of all Castile, are the greatest king among Christians, and, I might add with truth, the greatest in all the world. My opinion is that if you to-day attack the King of Aragon, with all your strength, you will overcome him and become both King of Castile and Aragon, nay, with God’s help, the Emperor of Spain.”

These sentiments were echoed by all present, for the Castilian knights felt, no doubt, that their honour and chivalry were becoming tarnished in the undignified and petty manner of war in which they were engaged.

Then it was that the King made his famous pronouncement on the loyalty of his subjects :—

“For my own part,” he said to those around him, “if I had for vassals men like those of the King of Aragon, I would fearlessly fight against you and against all Spain.”

Such talk from a leader could not but lower the enthusiasm of his lieutenants, and the council of war broke up in frowns and silence. Among themselves, the knights fretted and chafed at these unmerited taunts at their loyalty and honour, and some even went again to the King to assure him of their devotion and eagerness to fight. To one another they said that he was losing the most favourable oppor-

tunity of destroying his adversary, and was imprinting a stain on the honour of the Castilian army. The knights who approached him, however, were repulsed.

A few days later, a further opportunity arose for Don Pedro to attack the Aragonese, but he would do nothing more than allow Martin Lopez to harass the enemy's rear-guard with a few genetours. This captain, ashamed, perhaps, of the army's inactivity, made so furious an assault on the foe, that he threw them into great confusion, and it was thought, that had he been supported, Castile must that day have gained a great victory. For his exploit, Lopez was made Master of Alcantara by the King.

After another short rest in the capital, the next feature of this extraordinary campaign consisted in Don Pedro's again besieging Orihuela, from which he had just before so ignominiously and unnecessarily retired. His own men were being at the time besieged in Murviedo, but he showed no desire to go to their rescue. This time Orihuela fell before the Castilian army, but all requests for assistance from the beleaguered in Murviedo were entirely neglected. In the end the place fell. It was reduced by famine to accept what terms its defenders could arrange with the besiegers. These were of an honourable nature, and the garrison of some six hundred men-at-arms and an equal number of foot-soldiers were led to the frontier by the Conde and his men.

On the way, this wily prince, with his insinuating manners and his air of *beau garçon* and gallant knight,

whose polish had been received at the French Court, endeavoured to seduce the fallen Castilians from their old allegiance. Promises, caresses, kindnesses—all acts of such a rarity in these wars as to be the more astonishing—did he lavish on these saddened and battered heroes of Murviedo. He was so careful with the wounded, so generous in praise of their gallant defence, so clever in suggesting the possibilities of a new régime, the wielder of whose destinies he, perhaps, delicately adumbrated in a not too obvious portrait of himself.

The old warriors fell into the lure of his wiles. How different a master he must have seemed to them after the silent, fierce, and cruel Pedro! He told them the story of the coming of the Free Companies—those terrible soldiers, the bruit of whose deeds had been rumbling louder and louder of late from the plains of France. He pictured to these beaten knights, shorn of the assistance of their leader and King, depressed at his miserable inaction, utterly disgusted with his repeated cruelties, the valorous deeds of men like Du Guesclin, Sir Hugh de Calverley, and the Captal de Buch. “Whoever,” he said to them, finally, “whether now or hereafter, feeling himself dissatisfied with Don Pedro, desires to serve a lord more generous and more just, let him come to me, secure of a hearty welcome.”

Was it any wonder that his words made traitors among the soldiers of Don Pedro? Though many forthwith joined his standard, there were others, whom loyalty and fear kept true to their old banner.

Yet these same men were, perhaps, more hurtful in their act to the king than the frank deserters, for they carried with them, as they scattered into Castile, seeds of dissension, and insidious praises of Don Enrique. They would be only the traitors of to-morrow instead of the traitors of to-day.

The hour of Don Pedro's misfortune was coming. The spirits of the noble Castilian dead could now prick up their ghost-ears at those sounds coming from over the mountains.

The torrent that had so long threatened was about to break.

Urban V., Charles V., Charles of Bourbon, Du Guesclin, were all of them pointing the way from France to the Pyrenees. The Jacquerie was reduced, and in France there was a great ache for deliverance from the terrible Free Companies.

In Spain, thought Don Enrique, a corresponding desire and need of them. Soon they were to start, king-makers and king-breakers, from Montpellier in Languedoc.

Meanwhile Don Pedro was in Seville, decorating his Alcazar.

CHAPTER XXVI

TOO MANY HEROES

MELODRAMATICALLY, the story of the fall of Don Pedro is most satisfying and complete. Right triumphs as serenely as ever it did in a fourth act. Poetic justice is dealt out with rhythmical exactitude. Prince Charming takes up the Crown, and the villain is crushed into the dust. True, indeed, that the hero Enrique seems to have acquired not a few of the villain's bad qualities, but then it cannot be denied that of these Don Pedro had plenty.

In this last act, indeed, there is almost a plethora of heroes, and one scarcely knows which to choose for the true one.

Thus, there is the great Du Guesclin, and the even more heroic figure of the Black Prince, who is quite an historical example of the sentimental hero.

While Spain had been harassed and tortured by the ambitions of its princes, France, though it had for some time enjoyed peace with its principal foe, had still suffered from internal disorders and troubles.

There had been the affair of the Jacquerie, a terrible uprising of peasants and fanatics—to give the point of view of the ruling party, the only one which has survived.

The revolt had given rise to scenes as violent and horrible as any Castile had witnessed—wholesale slaughters, ravishments, executions *en masse*—until this state of things had been brought to an end by the Captal de Buch and the Comte de Foix at Meaux where, according to Froissart, more than seven thousand of the Jacques perished.

France, in its own manner, had suffered from the struggles of its petty princes and feudatories. Under the pretext of serving the King of Navarre, the Free Companies made war wherever there was promise of good plunder. That it was a profitable business, this captaining of Free Companies, we may believe, when we find Sir John Froissart speaking of a certain Sir Robert Knolles, who had gained by it upwards of 100,000 crowns.

At Auray, the question of the Dukedom of Brittany had been finally settled by the victory of John de Montfort and the death of Charles de Blois. It was at this battle that Du Guesclin, who fought on the side of France, was made prisoner by Sir John Chandos—a fortunate capture for that lucky knight, considering the amount of the ultimate ransom.

Almost the first thing that the young King of France determined on, as being necessary to the happiness and security of his kingdom, was the departure of the Free Companies.

To this end he assembled round him the wisest heads of the State, in order that a remedy against the evil might be devised, without the necessity of engaging them in open war. It was the crafty brain of Du

Guesclin that devised the scheme which eventually dispersed them.

He suggested that the manner of the death of Queen Blanche in Castile should be made a pretext for the gathering together under one standard of the various bands of ruffians in France.¹ He offered to put himself at the head of an expedition against Don Pedro, and received at the same time Charles's assent to the idea, and a permission to send a royal herald to ask of the leaders of the Companies a safe-conduct for himself.

This cornet found the gentlemen whom he was seeking camped comfortably enough near Châlons-sur-Saône. When the cornet was brought to the leaders sitting at their table, they were rather surprised at the coming of a messenger from the court.

There were there Sir Hugh Calverley, Mathieu de Gournay, Nicolas Strambourt, Robert Scot, Gutier Huet, the Green Knight, and several others.

The mention of Du Guesclin's name seems to have acted magically upon these knights, who were drinking somebody else's best wine in a handsomely furnished room of a chateau which did not belong to them. Sir Hugh Calverley especially was delighted at the sound of Du Guesclin's name—Sir Hugh, who, we learn, "ate like two men and fought like six."

No doubt memories of the famous Frenchman's prowess at Auray where Sir Hugh had fought against him, gave him a flush of generous feeling. As spokesman for his companions, Calverley granted the herald

¹ Sainte-Marthe says that Blanche wrote to her brother-in-law, Charles V., protesting against Peter's treatment of her.

the desired safe-conduct, and bade him lose no time in bringing back to Châlons the redoubtable Bertrand.

Nor had the captains of the Malandrines long to wait. Du Guesclin set out for them as soon as the safe-conduct reached him.

The gigantic Sir Hugh, so soon as he saw him coming, rushed out to meet him, fell on his neck, and called him companion and friend.

"Ah," said the careful Bertrand, "that is as may be, but I cannot tell if you are my friend, until know whether you are prepared to follow me in the expedition I have come to talk to you about."

Leading him towards the other knights, Sir Hugh declared that he would follow Du Guesclin anywhere, save against the Prince of Wales,¹ "and that I have sworn not to do," he added.

The best wine was produced, and compliments passed over the freebooters' board. They all had a great admiration for Du Guesclin, who physically and intellectually, was a very fine man. "A fine wine, Sir," said the Breton General to Sir Gutier Huet, who offered him the cup.

"No man living can deny that," answered the knight.¹

Then Du Guesclin, finding them all in such good humour, took the opportunity of explaining to the company the reason of his visit.

He told them of the wicked deeds of Don Pedro, who had cruelly put his innocent wife to death. He was, he said, a pagan, an infidel, and consorted only

¹ *Chronique de Du Guesclin.*

with Jews and Saracens. Du Guesclin mentioned all his infamies, and pointed out the injury done by his acts to the fair honour of France, and then he began to picture to the knights the wealth and richness of the land of Castile. He told them that the King of France would pay them the sum of 200,000 livres, and that the Holy Father would, in consideration of this crusade, grant them a remission of the excommunication then laid on them, as well as an absolution of all their sins.

To this latter inducement they replied that they had more faith in Du Guesclin than in all the prelates of France or Avignon. To which the captain answered in the following vein :—

“What rascals we all have been !” he cried, artfully including himself among them. “We have violated women, burnt houses, and killed men’s children. We have slaughtered cattle and sheep, pilfered geese, chickens, and capons, drunk the best wines, and committed sacrileges on churches and religious houses. In fact, we have been worse than thieves.

“Let us go against the pagans. We shall all become rich, and also win paradise for ourselves when we die.”¹

We may imagine that cheers went up at the conclusion of this speech, that the glasses were clinked on the tables, and that a great volume of talk and sentiment greeted these words.

Although nearly all the knights present declared

¹ *Chronique de Du Guesclin.*

their willingness to follow Du Guesclin anywhere, a few protested, saying that Spain was a long way off, and that they were very happy in France. These few dissentients were soon shouted down, and Du Guesclin took his departure with the promises of the leaders to follow him into Spain.

Returning to Paris, he lost no time in getting matters hastened along. He was received with great joy by everybody, and Charles was so pleased with the success of his expedition, that he embraced him before the whole court, and declared that his brave Breton had done more for his service than if he had won him a province.

There is extant the treaty beginning—"Tractatus Magnarum Compagniarum cum gentibus Regis et dom Henrico de Trastamara" which was concluded in pursuance of this meeting at Châlons. Du Guesclin's ransom was paid, and amounted to 100,000 francs¹ of which sum the Pope contributed a proportion.

Many adventurers throughout Europe were attracted by the romantic atmosphere which seemed to attend the expedition, and from several countries knights drifted to join the standard of Du Guesclin. The Maréchal d'Audeneham, a prisoner of the Black Prince on parole and the Comte de la Marche, a scion of the royal family, were ready enough to join the troops of filibusters and mauraunders gathering together in Languedoc.

There was some little wonder as to whether the

¹ Thirty thousand, according to Choisy.

English knights might, without failing in their allegiance to King Edward and his son, join an expedition arranged against a sovereign who was by treaty allied to their own. But the scruple does not seem to have deterred many from their object. Perhaps it was to satisfy the more particular and fastidious among them, that the expedition was declared to be against the Saracens.

The famous White Company was organised as a brigade of the army, and under its standard were gathered some of the best soldiers of the Malandrines.

About twelve or thirteen thousand men-at-arms were brought together in the neighbourhood of Châlons, of whom the greater part were French or Bretons. The remainder were mainly English, and were led by Sir Hugh de Calverley, or "Mosen Hugo de Caureley" as Ayala calls him.

There were also men of Flemish, Scottish, German, Welsh and Navarese origin among the forces.

The expedition started from Montpellier in Languedoc under the nominal command of the Comte de la Marche though actually under that of Du Guesclin.

What sort of a man was this Bertrand du Guesclin, called by some Du Glayquin or Glecquin or Gayaquin or Glesquin or Claikin? ¹

A stout enough fellow by all accounts and according to Hume the first general who ever appeared in Europe.²

¹ Ayala speaks of him as "Mosen Beltran de Claquin."

² Dillon.

Certainly a man with no illusions in the wrong place about chivalry or war, a veritable Captain Bluntschli of the fourteenth century, and as opposed to the sentimentality of the Black Prince as possible.

He is the exposition of common sense trampling over ideality or rather catching it up ; for the whole of man's spiritual life is an insistent dogging of the imagination by reason.

In person, Du Guesclin was, according to the old chronicles, of round and sunburnt face, snub-nosed, and with green eyes. His hair was crisp, his neck short, his shoulders large, thick and rather high. His arms were long ; he had a small hand, clumsy legs, and a face that was by no means handsome. He had but little education.

Further we learn that he was :—

“ In battle as calm and assured as if he were in his own room ; in combat fierce, strong, and swift. A frank fellow of open countenance, with ever a pleasant word ready to his tongue.”

This was Bertrand, the famous general of the Middle Ages, the man who was to drive Don Pedro from his throne, and later to win back France for the French.

A bit of a rogue in a way, it can hardly be doubted. with a curt contempt for all ecclesiastics whom he called “ furred hoods ” and with little respect even for the Holy Father, whom he blackmailed on behalf of himself and his companions with the lightest of consciences.

There arrived outside Avignon one day, towards

the end of the year 1365, the White Company with Bertrand at its head.

In the old Papal Palace there was great commotion and stir. When great kings like those of France and England bent a humble knee to the authority of Avignon, how dare a mere band of adventurers arrive in so martial and threatening a fashion ?

Pope Urban V. sent a messenger to the chief of the Companies desiring that they should remove themselves from the papal territory. Meanwhile, he promised to withdraw the ban of excommunication lying—very lightly it must be thought—on them. The legate of this perilous mission was the Cardinal of Jerusalem, and he had barely arrived in the camp of the strangers, when a body of English archers surrounded him and cried out insolently to know if he had brought them any money.

“ Bien soyez-vous venus : apportez-vous argent ? ” they shouted.

Du Guesclin, more polite, more politic, but no doubt equally venal, put the case of his men shortly before the Cardinal.

He represented the danger to which the Holy Father must necessarily expose himself if the troops got out of hand, and expressed to him his fears, that on such an occasion as this, the leaders would have practically no authority over them.

Others were less diplomatic, and cried that they must have money ; that the expedition was in fact

a religious crusade, which well deserved the assistance of Holy Church.

Du Guesclin added :—

“Our men,” he said, “have become good Catholics in spite of themselves, and they would very readily return to their old trade.”

The pope temporised, but the delay only irritated the freebooters, who, if they were believers, knew themselves excommunicated, and had therefore nothing more spiritually to fear, while if they were not, even less restraint attached to their conduct.

Fires soon began to flicker over the rich plains of Villeneuve, and rumours of pillage came quickly to Urban's ears.

And to all expostulation, Du Guesclin merely said :—

“What can I do? My men are excommunicated. The devil is in them, and we are no longer their masters.”

The pope capitulated. He could do nothing else. He made as good a bargain for himself as was possible, and paid the companies a sum of five thousand gold florins. Not all of this, however, came from the ecclesiastical coffers, for the townsmen of Avignon were charged with a proportion of this tribute—perhaps almost all of it.

Cuvelier makes Du Guesclin insist that the entire sum should be a papal contribution, inasmuch as he was not risking his life for the burghers, but for the interests of the Holy See. Mérimée, however, disproves this by a manuscript in the Archives of Avignon. And, as he says, Du Guesclin was not the

man to fetter with spiteful or sentimental conditions a contract plainly leaning in his favour.

So these knights of the Free Companies started out at last for Spain, absolved of their sins, with gold in their pockets, and songs upon their lips.

CHAPTER XXVII

KING HENRY

AND in Castile, Don Pedro the Cruel was making such preparations for the reception of the invaders as his weakened will and authority might allow. He went up and down the country with something of the swiftness and energy which had characterised his earlier days. Burgos he fixed on as the rallying point for his troops, Burgos the city of independent burghers, the heart of the third estate of Castilian existence, the citadel of the Commons.

But woful reports came from over the hills of the dreadful qualities of the oncoming host. Tales were whispered of men who were all seven feet high, and had arms like young trees, and teeth like horses; who fought like devils, and were encased in impenetrable and glistening armour. The reputation of the White Company and of commanders like Du Guesclin and the valiant Sir Hugh were thus carved by timid, imaginative spirits into immense figures of horror. It was hardly an army of men at all that was coming; superstition and ignorance pictured it as a huge cohort of mailed fiends approaching with irresistible vigour. And in the nearer Aragon friendly hands stretched out to greet them, and fire



DON ENRIQUE DE TRASTAMARA

answered fire from the hill-top to hill-top, and guides and provisions met the invaders at the mountain passes.

Don Pedro IV. and the old debauchee of Navarre entered into more treaties with each other, which neither of them intended to keep, and between them partitioned Castile, which they saw already conquered and in their hands.

The men of the Free Companies were no sooner in Aragon than they began their old tactics of pillage and rapine, and declined to believe that they were not yet in the enemy's country, but in that of their ally. Don Pedro of Castile lost an opportunity which might have thrown the balance of things towards his side, when he declined the intervention on his behalf with the leaders of the English Companies of the Seigneur d'Albret, a vassal of the King of England.

The proposals included the payment by Don Pedro of considerable sums of money, and to this he could not agree.

In the March of 1366 the first blow was struck at Castile, when Sir Hugh de Calverley attacked the city of Borja, an Aragonese town then in Castilian hands. On the approach of the English the garrison fled. Then the entire army swept over Navarre into Castile, and entered the town of Calahorra as easily as they had taken Borja.

This defection, which was the work of the town's rulers, nevertheless enraged the patriotic inhabitants very much. So much so, that the women tore their

hair, and beat their breasts at their disgrace. For the folk of Calahorra had an historical reputation to lose. Their constancy and endurance had been famous from Roman times, and it is known that Augustus Cæsar chose his bodyguard from its inhabitants.

Calahorra was made the scene of a rather premature coronation. Du Guesclin in the name of the French ; Sir Hugh for the English ; and the Conde de Denia for the Aragonese, solemnly offered to Don Enrique the Crown of Castile.

"Take the Crown," said Du Guesclin. "You owe this honour to the many noble knights who have elected you their leader in this campaign.

"Besides, Don Pedro, your enemy, refuses to meet you in the battle-field, and thus himself acknowledges that the Castilian throne is vacant."

With well-feigned modesty the courtly Conde resisted for a while these flatteries and honours, but, after allowing himself to be pressed a little further, accepted the Crown with the best grace in the world. As soon as it was placed on his head, Don Tello unfurled the royal standard, and passed through the camp crying, "Castile for King Enrique ! Long live King Enrique !"

Then everyone cheered, and the march was resumed.

When the enemy was only a day's journey away from Burgos, Don Pedro remained in retirement in his palace as if hypnotised by the coming disaster. Confusion and panic were in the air, ready to break out at any moment. Though the King issued no

orders, and seemed to have lost all confidence in himself and his fortunes, there were still many gallant gentlemen on his side, who looked but for a word to fling themselves before the foe.

The burghers were a stout-hearted lot. They had money and arms, and the city had good defences. Had the King but spoken, they were ready enough to fight.

But on Saturday, the eve of Palm Sunday, a body of horsemen was seen preparing to leave the city, and a guard of six hundred Moors was drawn up in order before the gates.

"The King deserts us. The King deserts us," went from mouth to mouth, and a great crowd gathered round the palace.

The fathers of the city made their way to Don Pedro, and begged him not to desert them, saying that their lives and goods were at his service, if he would only use them.

Falteringly Pedro thanked them, but urged the necessity of his departure for Seville whither, he said, the enemy were thought to be marching.

"Do the best you can," he replied to their entreaties and queries for instructions.

And then, with his Granadine bodyguard, he left the city to its fate.

Don Pedro evidently thought himself in a desperate state, though he had not yet relinquished all idea of holding his crown, for we can detect the outlines of a plan of defence in his movements and orders at this time. Thus he wrote to the captains of all the towns of the Aragonese frontier to desert their posts and to

join him at Toledo. It would seem that he wished to draw the enemy well into the interior of Spain, and then to trust to hardships, and the climate, and guerilla warfare for his means of defence. This was a policy which has often enough served its purpose both in the Peninsula and in France. Had Don Pedro possessed the affections of his nobles, it might have succeeded in this instance.

Burgos, after being deserted by its Sovereign, opened its gates readily enough to Enrique, and the next day the prince was crowned for the second time, in the church of the monastery of Las Huelgas.

The Conde signalled his accession by a shower of new honours and titles to his followers and friends. To Du Guesclin he gave his own late title of Trastámara ; Sir Hugh he made Lord of Carrion ; the Conde de Denia was created Marquis de Villena.

Don Tello resumed the title of Lord of Biscay, and Don Sancho inherited the estate of the late Don Juan de Alburquerque which, since his son's death, had been forfeited to the Crown.

Indeed, 'so many favours, honours, and dignities were scattered among the knight-companions that a popular saying took its birth from this hour of easy generosity—*Mercedes Enriquenas* or Enrique's favours signify gifts obtained before they are earned. The more universal expression of " Castles in Spain " is also by some authorities attributed to this episode.

Don Pedro, after a short stay at Toledo, went to Seville. His flight through Spain was not unnaturally the means of bringing many of his adherents and

courtiers to the Pretender's standard. One, Diego de Padilla, the Master of Calatrava, turned towards the new power in complete forgetfulness of the old.

Garci Alvarez sold Toledo to the allies for two extensive domains and a considerable sum of money. In this city Don Enrique held his first court, and received the homage of many deputations and nobles. The Jews, who had always looked on Don Pedro as a protector, were made by the new king to pay for their old loyalty. Large contributions in money were extracted from them.

Even in Seville, the city of Don Pedro's heart, the city of his loves and his youth, Don Pedro found the populace no more united than elsewhere against the foe.

Rumours of his unholy alliances with the infidels and the Jews were bruited abroad; and talk of a Moorish invasion planned by the King served to make the people bitter against him.

Sedition burned in the city, and flamed up in ominous fashion, when great tumultuous crowds surged round the Alcazar.

One of the first things that Don Pedro did on arrival at Seville was to send his daughter Beatriz with a faithful servant into Portugal, to whose Infante she was betrothed. He sent also the stipulated dowry and a considerable quantity of jewellery which had belonged to Maria de Padilla.

Soon the discontent of Seville's people turned to absolute insurrection, and an assault was made upon the palace. Even while the rabble was running through the galleries and patios of the place, the King

made his escape, accompanied by his two daughters, Constanza and Isabel, Martin Lopez, Master of Alcantara, Leonor, a natural daughter of Don Enrique, and some few caballeros. Froissart says "with his wife and children," which may mean that he took either Isabella, the woman of the bed-chamber, or some one other of the royal concubines mentioned in his will.

Hardly was the party on horseback, before the mob burst with a roar into the Alcazar on its errand of destruction.

In this hour of affliction, Don Pedro turned to Portugal and its ruler. A marriage had long been in contemplation between the Infante Don Fernando and the King's daughter, Doña Beatriz. Pedro hoped perhaps to obtain some assistance from the father-in-law-elect of his daughter. He sought an interview with the King of Portugal, but was surprised when on the way thither he was met by his daughter Beatriz, ignominiously sent back to him by his faithless ally. "The Infante Don Fernando no longer desires to wed the Infanta Doña Beatriz."

That was the message from Portugal to Castile—Castile now a wanderer and a vagabond in his own land.

Further, Don Pedro was informed that he must hope for no asylum or assistance from Portugal. The King listened to this message, but returned no answer.

Alone afterwards with one of his own knights, he is said to have taken a few gold pieces from his pocket

and scattered them over the roof of the house where he had been staying.

The caballero, thinking, perhaps, of his unpaid stipend, said to the King that such money would be fitter given to his servants than sown in such inhospitable soil.

"Truly," said the King, savagely, "I sow now; but one day I shall return and reap." Luckily for Portugal, this was a prophecy never to be fulfilled.

Then followed nearly two months of wanderings, privations, and constant flights from place to place, until, at last, at Monterey in Castile, a few faithful voices were raised to greet the King, and a few faithful knights gathered round him once more.

These were the vassals of that faithful servant, Don Fernando de Castro.

News of a rather better nature was now brought to Don Pedro. He learnt that some of his cities still held out against Enrique, and the valiant De Castro announced that he was gathering together an army.

In the castle of Zamora, at the extremities of his kingdom, Don Pedro thus gathered round him the shadow of a court.

He wrote from there to the Prince of Wales, then at Bordeaux, a letter in which he gave a pitiful account of his extremity, an account calculated to move the sensible and romantic heart of the Black Prince.

Into this composition Don Pedro threw all his cunning, for the help of the English Prince was, he knew, his only chance of keeping his crown on his head.

Don Pedro also wrote to Carlos the Bad, who was the

traditional enemy of the French, and the ally of the English.

At Santiago de Compostella, Don Pedro put the Archbishop to death.

Meanwhile Enrique and his troops went from town to town in one long triumphal progress, until at last they reached Seville. Here, in what Don Pedro had always considered his stronghold, they were received more delightedly than anywhere else.

So great was the crowd at the city's gates that Don Enrique took hours to pass through the streets into the palace. So anxious was everyone to behold him that, although he reached the city's gates in the morning, it was vesper time before he gained the Alcazar.

So, but for an insignificant corner of Galicia, Castile had been conquered by the Free Companies almost, indeed, without blood, and certainly without any struggle.

It is probable that these pugnacious gentry were disappointed at meeting in Don Pedro a foe so unworthy of their prowess. At any rate, Don Enrique soon began to find them a great trouble and source of expense, and suggested to Du Guesclin the question of their return. The bastard sought only to retain the Breton general, Sir Hugh, and some 1500 knights; the rest he was anxious to see well on their way back to France as soon as might be.

Some of the French did, indeed, return, including the Conte de la Marche and the Sire de Beaujeu, and a terrible journey was theirs.

All the fighting that had been lacking in the

anabasis was forthcoming in full measure in the return. The Castilians, the Navarrese, the French, all barred their way, but these tremendous fighters were everywhere victorious, and re-entered France somewhat decimated, but in good order.

Meanwhile the knight and his squires who had been charged with Don Pedro's letter to the Black Prince—written, according to Froissart, in “a most piteous and lamentable strain”—had arrived at Bordeaux, and made their way to the monastery of St Andrew where the Prince was staying.

Prince Edward, when he had taken the letter from the messengers and read it, said to them :—

“ You are welcome to us from our cousin the King of Castile. You will stay in our court, and will not return without an answer.”

The Prince then remained in his apartment, thinking much on the contents of the letter from Don Pedro. Soon he called a conference of his knights, to which there came Sir John Chandos and Sir William Felton.

“ When they were come, he said, smiling, ‘ My lords, here is great news from Spain.’ ”

Prince Edward read King Peter's letter over to his knights “ who lent a willing ear.” He then asked their advice.

Sir John and Sir William stood looking at each other, but they said never a word. The Prince appealed to them again.

“ Speak boldly, whatever be your opinion,” he demanded.

The Prince was then advised by his knights to invite

Don Pedro to state in person his wants and intentions "that they should be better informed from his conversation how they were to act."

An expedition was therefore planned to escort Don Pedro from Corunna.

This was to consist of twelve vessels, which were to be filled with archers and men-at-arms. But when these ships were awaiting a wind at Bayonne, the King of Castile arrived there himself with a few of his people, and as much treasure as he could take away with him.

The English received him handsomely, and explained how they had been about to go to Corunna to escort him to Prince Edward. Don Pedro received this intelligence with great joy, and warmly thanked the knights present.

Without making a long stay in Bayonne, the whole company set out for Bordeaux, where they arrived safely.

The Prince of Wales rode out to meet his ally, accompanied by his knights and esquires.

"When they met, he saluted him very respectfully, and paid him every attention by speech and action, for he knew perfectly well how to do so; no prince of his time understood so well the practice of good breeding."¹

After refreshing themselves, the cavalcade returned to Bordeaux with Don Pedro riding at the Prince's right hand side, "and he would not suffer it to be otherwise."

On the way, the Castilian told the English warrior

¹ Froissart.

the story of his misfortunes, and received in return many sympathetic replies.

Arrived at the monastery, Don Pedro was conducted to an apartment prepared for him, where he found fine linen and clothes ready for his service. "When he had dressed himself suitably to his rank, he waited on the Princess and the ladies who," says Froissart, "all received him very politely."

We know, however, that the Princess of Wales took an instinctive dislike to Don Pedro at once on account of the expression of his face. She was never able to bring herself to agree with the scheme afterwards arranged on his behalf by Prince Edward.

Among the knights who were gathered round the Black Prince there were some who had no liking for the proposed interference in the politics of the Peninsula, and felt that it was, as they said, their duty to lay their advice before their lord.

"My lord," declared their spokesman, "You have often heard the old proverb, 'all covet, all lose.' True it is, that you are one of the princes of this world, the most enlightened, esteemed, and honoured. It is also well-known that no king, far or near at this present moment, dares anger you, such reputation have you in chivalry for valour and good fortune. You ought therefore in reason to be contented with what you have got, and not seek enemies."

They further mentioned the notorious reputation of Don Pedro for cruelty, irreligion, and lust, and reminded the Prince of the suspicious death of his wife, Blanche.

To these and similar addresses, Edward replied that

he was well aware of Don Pedro's life and conduct, and of his faults, for which he was then suffering. But that a bastard should possess a kingdom for an inheritance, and drive his brother, the lawful heir, out of it, was not in his opinion to be suffered. Such a state of things was of the greatest prejudice to royalty.

Thus we see the Black Prince was a firm believer in the divine right of kings, and, to complete his point of view, he informed his council that the King of Castile and his father were old allies.

Pedro, in return for so fair a speech, was full of promises to his new friends, to which, says Froissart, they listened eagerly, "for both the English and Gascons, by nature, are of a covetous disposition."

Thus the thing was settled, and the power of England called in to stem the overflowing flood of Enrique's fortunes.

Further to secure the affections of King Edward and pledge him to the undertakings of that chivalrous son of his whose adventures we know were not always to the royal liking, Don Pedro sent an ambassador to London to treat for the marriage of his daughters, Constanza and Isabel, with the English princes. To the ambassadors he also gave a long letter, whose object was to incline the feelings of King Edward III. towards himself.

Among other points which he makes may be noticed the following :—

"It is notorious how, at an early age, we lost our lord and father, King Alfonso ; and how that this Don Enrique and another of our brothers, Don Fadrique,

both of them our elders, who ought to have defended and counselled us, far from so doing, coveted our heritage, and entered into a League at Medina Sidonia against us. . . . The death of the Master Don Fadrique was well deserved. . . . Tell King Edward, moreover, that I am called cruel and a tyrant because I have chastised those who refused to obey me, and who did much injury to the peaceable inhabitants of my kingdom."

Edward III. granted Don Pedro his protection, and promised to restore him to his throne.

Then followed the Treaty of Libourne, in which Don Pedro engaged himself, in the event of the recovery of his kingdom, to grant to England a part of Biscay, and especially certain sea-ports there, and the sum of 550,000 golden florins of Florentine coinage. The young Infantas, his daughters by Maria de Padilla, were to be left with the English as hostages at Bordeaux.

Thus we see that the Black Prince did not make, on the face of it, a bad bargain for himself.

The matter once settled, the Prince of Wales threw himself with great energy into the preparation for hostilities. He was glad of a chance to test once again his good fortune in war, and to exhibit to all men his great valour and prowess, which had now nearly ten years of indolence lying upon it.

In order to pay his soldiers, he melted down his plate, and in all friendliness he gave his new comrade and ally a hint on the art of kingship.

"Treat," said he to Don Pedro, "your vassals

kindly. Unless you win their affection, your Crown will never be assured to you."

The Castilian monarch appeared to be convinced of the wisdom of this advice, but in his heart the old hatred and vengeance were still smouldering.

The Prince's admonitions may have represented a knightly qualm that the cause of England's new adventure was not the cleanliest and best-advised in the world. Attracted by the activity at England's continental headquarters, many wandering or deserting knights came into the camp at Bordeaux with ugly tales of the deeds of the man for whom all this excitement was stirring.

As to water in the desert were irresistibly attracted from France, Navarre, and the whole Peninsula, all sorts and conditions of exiled English knights, ready enough to fight under their own standard again.

Don Enrique, for his part, seems to have treated the reported English invasion as a matter of no great seriousness. But Du Guesclin evidently attached weight to the rumours, and had, we know, a great respect for the English captain.

"Sir Bertrand, think of the Prince of Wales; they say he intends to make war upon us, and to restore Don Pedro. What do you say to this?"

To which Sir Bertrand replied:—

"He is so valiant and determined a knight that, since he has undertaken it, he will exert himself to the utmost to accomplish it."

The future Constable of France added the advice that Henry should keep up the affections of his sub-

jects and suffer no one to leave the kingdom without his permission. For his own part, he (Du Guesclin) would go into France to seek assistance there, where his popularity was likely to bring followers to his side.

Thus, by the eternal principle of compensation, the fortunes of Don Enrique, after having been borne along on a full and vigorous flood-tide, were now beginning to show signs of the succeeding ebb. His chief ally, Charles of France, was not in a position to offer him much practical assistance, and the old King of Navarre had played as usual into the hands of the highest bidder. As for Pedro IV., he began to insist on a speedy payment for such services to the cause as he had already rendered, and was in no wise anxious to supply the reinforcements which Don Enrique sought of him.

The Pretender convoked a Cortes at Burgos, the first city of Castile which had recognised his authority, and there demanded of the Commons the means to repel the threatened invasion of the English. The Commons voted a tax, which was to supply the money necessary for the occasion.

This impost, which was enforced with great vigour, produced the sum of nineteen millions of maravedis, a sum which is considerable, but is nothing like so enormous as it sounds.

Almost with enthusiasm did the nobility of Castile rally to the standard of the new sovereign. Probably it was an instinct of self-defence that brought them into the field on this occasion, for though the *Ricos Hombres* assembled in good numbers at Seville, there were

several small insurrections against Don Enrique in the more distant parts of the kingdom. It must be believed that they really were turbulent barons, and that many of the rigours of Don Pedro's rule, though doubtless excessive, were rather essential after all.

About this time the King of Portugal died, and Don Tello engaged in an extraordinary affair.

Tello was well aware that his right to the Lordship of Biscay, lay in the fact of his having married Juana the heiress of the country. When, however, she died as a prisoner of Don Pedro, Tello thought himself thereby the less secure of his hold on the affections of the Biscayans.

Thus, at the time when the generous Enrique gave back to his younger brother the province, there was discovered a young woman who declared herself to be the original Juana. Tello lived with her as his wife for the better security of his estate, although he knew she was an impostor. The ruse was, of course, discovered, and proved somewhat injurious to Tello's reputation with his very independent and haughty vassals.

For the purpose of that campaign, which was to decide whether Castile should be ruled over by a Pedro or an Enrique, the kingdom of Navarre was necessary in many ways.

Probably Carlos, passing his life in orgies which it is said were quite equal to the most fantastic and savage of Nero or Caligula, had never been so sorely beset with invitations for an alliance in his life.

Like most remarkable spirits, good or bad, of his own

or, indeed, of any time, he was but imperfectly in touch with the conventions and ideas of his day. Chivalry was no more to him than it was to Du Guesclin or Don Pedro, or the Captal de Buch or any of the rest of them.

Probably the only class who had any respect for the notion was the bourgeoisie whom it affected to despise.

Carlos then was offered money and promises on every hand, both by Edward, Don Pedro, and Don Enrique. He took all he could get from everybody, and did as little for it as he could contrive. He promised and swore anything and everything. At length, however, the contributors of these subsidies and the parties to these oaths which were never kept, became peremptory and demanded their part of the bargain. Edward of Wales had no mind to be trifled with by this Spanish Nero, and when he appeared with his army before the pass of Roncesvalles, he announced his intention of forcing it, if the treaty agreeing to its being kept open were not fulfilled.

Carlos the Bad issued at the same time orders to defend it, and orders to allow it to be surprised—a diplomacy of a dainty cynicism.

And when called upon by Don Pedro and Don Enrique to carry out his various promises, he evolved the following expedient to allow himself the advantage of being on the side of the victor whoever he might be. In this adventure Carlos displayed a quiet humour and freshness of idea, which gives him a distinct character among his peers of the Peninsula.

On the Navarrese frontier was a certain castle of Borja, occupied by one Olivier de Mauny, a

Breton knight, and cousin to Du Guesclin. This man was an adventurer, to whom war was a means of livelihood. With him Carlos had a conference, where, we may imagine, the two enjoyed a good laugh at the plot they then hatched. At the very moment that the English were forcing their way through the pass of Roncesvalles, the King of Navarre set out on a hunting expedition. As had been arranged with Mauny, he became separated from the main body of his huntsmen, and allowed himself to be surrounded by De Mauny's knights. He was then placed in the Castle of Borja, where he fancied he could safely await the ultimate falling out of things before declaring for the stronger party.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE BLACK PRINCE

“ONE of the best knights of this world, a valiant man and a noble prince.”

Thus Froissart on Edward of Woodstock, Prince of Wales, victor of Poitiers and newly-made ally of Castile.

“His liberality was his staff, and nobleness his director. Rightly might men say,” remarks Chandos the Herald in his rhyming chronicle, “that search the world over, you could find no such Prince.”

“As gallant in time of peace, as he was fiery in combat,” declares the Abbé de Choisy, in his *History of Charles V.*

We have seen what Du Guesclin thought of him in the last chapter. Du Guesclin knew him for a chivalrous knight and a bold warrior.

Only to the Spaniards themselves does it seem that his fame amounted to little. The Jesuit Moissant, in his *Le Prince Noir* remarks how he completely failed to find any trace of his reputation or doings in the archives of Valladolid and Burgos. Neither was he more successful with the private registers of the monastery of Las Huelgas where, as we have seen, the Prince was staying at the time of Don Pedro's visit.

His reputation was, of course, a European one, and

the kingdoms of the Spanish Peninsula only really began to be a feature of Continental politics from the reign of Don Pedro and his successor.

But for Aragon's connection with Majorca, and Castile's with Sicily, Cyprus and Naples, the Spaniards were shut off from much political intercourse by the Pyrenees.

Perhaps, therefore, to them, Edward was no more than a prince enjoying a kind of luxurious exile. His fame had the rust of ten years on it, and it may well be that the reports of his extravagance and fine living in Aquitaine portrayed him for Castilian and Aragonese minds as a noble knight, playing the part of a slumberous and heavily-landed proprietor.

Certain it is, that ten years of peace, however good it may be for everybody else, is very bad for a soldier. It always has been so since the luxury of Capua destroyed the fine anger of Hannibal.

The Black Prince was first and foremost a soldier. In politics he was a poor figure, a poorer even than his father who was never too brilliant a man in this direction. By the side of men like Charles V., or the Pope, or Du Guesclin, or the Emperor, he was little better than a child.

He looks rather like the first complete Englishman on whom the full light of history falls, the father in spirit of so many more of his type, simple—as men go—incredibly insistent, not clever, but wonderfully successful.

Sentimental to a point, morosely religious, in conversation probably not brilliant, brave, of course,



The born unto, and Meriting, a Crown. Yet by my Crimes Don Pedro gain'd his Thron.
Unequal Fate allotted me a Grave: To make a King, than to bee One, is more Draw.

EDWARD, THE BLACK PRINCE

unimaginative and yet—secret of the type's success—dynamic.

Nelson's prototype, and Clyde's, and that of many an English general.

Joan, the fair maid of Kent,¹ loved him very deeply, an affection which—reading between the lines of certain chroniclers—we may suspect bored the famous knight not a little.

In Choisy we read that the Prince declared of her:—

“She would have me by her all day in her chamber, if she had her way. And that I will not do.”

We may also notice that this was not the first occasion on which a “king in exile” had flung himself for protection upon the clemency of the victor of Poitiers.

Already at his court was another poor little princeling, King James of Majorca, whom Pedro IV. of Aragon had despoiled of his inheritance. In the advance against Enrique which followed, King James led one of the divisions.

Among the knights who drifted to Prince Edward's standard during the period of mobilisation at Dax, were Sir Hugh de Calverley and the English contingent of the Free Companies.

They explained to Enrique that their promise to fight for him had excluded the possibility of war with their own lord and they asked leave to depart, which Enrique courteously and generously enough granted. The parting took place with every species

¹ For a charming account of her love story with the Prince, see the *Chronique des quatre premiers Valois* quoted in Luce.

of good-will on either side. Calverley expressed his regret, and Don Enrique his. The Conde loaded his late captain with magnificent presents, and wished him every good fortune.

The next occasion on which they met was to find them in arms against each other.

At last, in Aquitaine, the months of preparations drew to an end. The armourers of Bordeaux finished their task, and a great store of swords and coats of mail were ready for the warriors of the expedition.

The Princess gave birth to a son just before the army started, and many saw in this event a happy augury for the success of the campaign.

Poor Joan was very sad at parting with her lord, and her words, as Chandos gives them, have in them a ring of intense feeling.

"I have no heart, no blood, no veins, but every member fails me when I think of his departure."¹

Two months were the troops in the mountain passes, where they were detained by overwhelming snow-storms. Much privation and suffering were experienced during this journey.

At last, however, the little English army came through the passes after a few skirmishes with the Navarrese, and debouched into the plains.

At the news of the approach of the Black Prince, Don Enrique, who was at Treviño, held a council of war with his chiefs and captains.

¹ "Ore nay je coer, sang ne vayne qe ne me faille et tout li membre Quant de son partier me remembre."

To them he read a letter from the shrewd King Charles of France who, though no soldier himself, was quick enough to appreciate the military strength of others.

In this communication he advised the Companies and Enrique not to risk a general engagement with so skilful a warrior as the Prince of Wales, and soldiers so formidable as his veterans.

To this Du Guesclin added his expressed conviction, that in a pitched battle the English were invincible. He suggested the adoption of a guerrilla warfare.

Other knights of the Companies seconded these resolutions, for the fame of Prince Edward was very great among the French.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE BATTLE OF NAJARA

*"Sirs, the time I tell you of
Was upon a Saturday,
The third day of April,
When the sweet and gentle birds
Begin again their song
Through meadow, wood and field,
At this time was without fail
The great battle before Najara."*

—Chandos Herald (*circa* 1370).

GOOD fortune must now have seemed within touching distance of Don Pedro once again. Among the host under the Prince of Wales, there was no man more eager for battle than Castile's legitimate king. All his old wrath and frenzied desire for vengeance were driving him impetuously to the battle-field, and, before the very terror of his name, the first towns, which the invading army reached, crumpled up into a weak submission to the army of restoration.

Though Don Enrique may have felt it to be a rashness in him, the counsels of the Castilians, who certainly entertained no superstitious fear of the Black Prince, prevailed on him to take the bolder course and challenge an engagement with the English.

"Honour," he said, "forbade him to abandon to

the vengeance of his enemies those cities and men who had sacrificed everything to his cause."

So the Castilians and Du Guesclin entrenched themselves in a strong position chosen by the Breton General, and awaited the approach of the English.

Among the English, Sir Thomas Felton, whom the bloodlessness of the expedition up to this point had perhaps annoyed, went to the Prince one day for permission to leave the main body of the army and reconnoitre ahead on his own account.

"I have many knights and squires under my command," said this brave knight, whose military ardour was soon to cost him his death, "as good men as myself, who are anxious to do something worthy of notice."

The Prince granted the desired permission, and Sir Thomas with Ralph de Hastings, who, we learn, "esteemed not death at two cherries," and some four or five hundred men, set out to make their arms glorious.

When they were separated from the main body by a matter of a few leagues, they were suddenly surrounded by about three thousand¹ Castilian horsemen. Felton, who remained perfectly cool, bid his men dismount, and ranged them under a steep hillock.

Sir William Felton, the brother of the Seneschal refused to dismount, and flung himself among the enemy. With a lance-thrust he pierced a man-at-arms through at the first onslaught, but was immediately surrounded and cut to pieces.

¹ Six thousand, says Froissart.

For a long time, the rest of the band defied all the efforts of the Castilians to break them, and fought undaunted for hours round the banner of the Seneschal.

At last, goaded by the persistent defence of so small a body of men, two captains of adventurers, the Maréchal d'Audeneham and the Bègue de Villaines, led an assault of dismounted knights against the English, while some Castilian genetours charged them in the rear. Overwhelmed by the rush of men, the English column broke and everyone was taken or slain.

The heroic defence of the English is commemorated, says Mérimée, to this day in the local traditions of the place by a hillock there called *Inglesmendi* or The Mound of the English.

On Friday, the 2nd of April, the Prince of Wales decamped from Logrono. He knew that Don Enrique was not far away, and by about nine o'clock, the English army had arrived before the town of Navarette.

The day was spent in scouting to find the whereabouts of the enemy, and towards the evening secret orders were given for the whole army to hold itself in readiness.

Meanwhile, King Henry's army was similarly engaged in feeling for its foe.

I follow Froissart in the narration of this battle, supplementing or comparing his account with that of the other chroniclers.

The Spaniards had plenty of food, and were in



EFFIGY OF FOURTEENTH CENTURY SPANISH NOBLE

tolerable comfort, and in their camp there was considerable merriment.

With the English it was different. Food was very scarce, and what there was of it was purchasable only at exorbitant prices. The men were desperate, and looked forward to the battle with the fierce desire of hungry men towards food lying almost within their reach.

At midnight the trumpets of Enrique's army sounded, and the whole force left its tents and formed itself into array of battle. The three divisions into which it separated itself were commanded by Bertrand Du Guesclin, Don Tello and Don Sancho, and King Henry himself.

Altogether, according to Froissart, the Castilian host amounted to about seventy-five thousand men.

Ayala only allows the Castilian army about five thousand horsemen, and is indefinite about the infantry with Enrique.

The English, on whose side he was not, and of whose numbers we might imagine him to know less, he carefully estimates at forty thousand fighting men.¹ This corresponds with Froissart.

"When the sun had risen, it was a beautiful sight to view these battalions with their brilliant armour glittering with its beams." With the Spanish force, Enrique, whose charm of manner always won friends for him, passed swiftly through the ranks "sweetly

¹ Choisy says the English army consisted of thirty thousand horse, and forty thousand foot, while the Castilian force was very much larger especially in infantry (p. 151).

entreating" his men to do their best, and putting them all into high spirits.

The Prince of Wales kept his army in the formation in which it had been drawn up before Vittoria, that is in three divisions, like that of the Conde.

With an evil significance for Don Enrique's side, there crept into the English ranks, just at dawn, a little party of Castilian deserters.

Then, as the light of day revealed quite plainly to each other the opposing hosts, each man tightened his armour, and made ready for instant combat.

Just at this moment, Sir John Chandos came up to the Prince of Wales with his banner in his hands.¹

"My lord," he said, "here is my banner, I place it in your hands. Is it your pleasure that I raise it to-day? God be praised I have such lands and heritage as becomes the state of a knight banneret." Chandos here aspired to a new honour.

The Prince of Wales gave the banner to Don Pedro, who unrolled it, and either he or the Prince then returned it to Chandos with the tail made square, thereby creating him a knight-banneret.

Sir John returned to his own knights and squires and told them of their new honour and his own, saying :—

"Gentlemen, behold my banner and yours. Guard it as it becomes you !"

Then the armies began to draw a little nearer to each other, and the Prince of Wales, with eyes and

¹ We learn from the noble Chandos's Herald, that this banner was of "silk, rich and graceful." V. 3659.

hands uplifted, turned his thoughts to the God of battles.

And, when he had prayed, he turned to Don Pedro and said : " Sire, King, you shall this day know whether you have anything in this kingdom of Castile or not."

He then cried out, " Banners advance in the name of God and St George ! "

The trumpets of either side sounded the advance, and to the cry of the English, Enrique's men answered, " King Enrique for Castile ! "

The first onslaught was very fierce, and took place between the battalions commanded respectively by the Duke of Lancaster and Bertrand Du Guesclin. " There was," says Froissart, " a terrible medley of spears and shields."

The knights attacked each other ferociously, but less damage was done than might be expected on account of the strong armour in which all were encased. Sir John Chandos was singled out for personal combat by a Castilian caballero of the name of Martin Fernandez. This man, who was a lusty fellow of enormous size, seized Sir John, and, with the strength of his arms, pulled him from his horse. The Englishman, however, managed to drag his enemy down with him, when they struggled together in the dust for a while, much encumbered and burdened by their armour. Fernandez, by his weight, gained at last the upper hand, and proceeded to pin his opponent to the ground, by the force of his knee. But Sir John, who had preserved his coolness

throughout the whole desperate struggle, was watching, poignard in hand, for an opening to show itself in the Castilian's armour.

At last, as they turned and twisted, a gap presented itself in the heavy steel, and Chandos plunged in the dagger with all his strength. Lifeless, the heavy mass fell over him and covered him with blood. He cast it from him, and rejoined his knights.

While the Duke of Lancaster was fiercely engaged with Du Guesclin's men, the Prince of Wales and Don Pedro charged the division in command of Don Tello and Don Sancho. This broke in the most unexpected manner, and was severely cut up by the Captal de Buch and the Lord de Clisson. To counterbalance the English success, in this quarter, so fierce had been the onset of Du Guesclin's knights, that the battalions opposed to him had given way a little. But the soldiers of the Black Prince's command were now able to join their efforts to those of John of Gaunt in attacking Du Guesclin's men. A most desperate encounter followed, in which the slings of the Castilians did much damage to the English army.

This was the turning-point of the battle, and when the Captal de Buch and the English archers directed their energies on the body of men thus left unprotected by the flight of Don Tello and his warriors, fortune had turned definitely in favour of the Prince of Wales.

Gallantly enough did Don Enrique return to the assault, and time after time did he urge on his men with cries of encouragement or reproaches.

"Gallant Sirs," shouted the brave bastard, "what do you do? Will you now betray me? You who have made me king. Turn again and with God's assistance, the day shall still be ours."

But the day was not to be theirs. At the rear of the shaken and wavering troops of Enrique, was the river Najerilla, and into its waters many of the Castilians were driven. On his wing, the King of Majorca had acquitted himself well, though in that direction the honours of the fight were about equally shared.

With the Prince of Wales, were some of the best soldiers in Europe, and slowly but surely his knights and squires rolled back the Castilians towards the banks of the river.

Don Pedro, for whom once again fortune seemed to be faintly smiling, was something of his old self in this battle. Mounted on a large black horse, he threw himself into the thickest part of the fray, and fought with great energy and desperation.

As he and his immediate body-knights hacked and slashed their way over the battle-field, Don Pedro kept crying out continually: "Where is this bastard who calls himself the King of Castile?" He sought everywhere to find him and engage him in single combat.

The sight and smell of so much blood began to produce in Don Pedro a return of his old frenzy for slaughter. When the battle was over and the English trumpets had sounded the retirement, Don Pedro was still to be seen madly engaged in bloodthirsty and vindictive pursuit. The old lust tingled in his veins,

and he roved breathlessly over the scene of carnage, dealing out death with his own hands. Even men who delivered themselves up as prisoners were not free from his fury. He murdered Iñigo Lopez de Orozco, whom he met with his captor, a certain Gascon knight, much to the knight's and the English army's disgust.

When the question of prisoners came to be spoken of, it was found that the English army held Bertrand du Guesclin, Sir Arnold d'Andreghen, the Bègue de Villaines, Don Sancho and many others.¹

The Conde escaped, when he saw that the day was hopelessly lost, but he fought like a brave knight, and, but for the weakness or treachery of his brother, Don Tello, would have given an even better account of himself and his battalions.

When the fight was won, and the cost and the prisoners were being counted, the Prince of Wales asked where the Conde was.

"E lo bort, es mort o' pres?"—And the bastard, is he dead or taken, he asked, and, when they told him of his escape, he answered prophetically with the intuition of a true general: "Noy ay res fait—then nothing is done."

Thus was fought the battle of Najara or Navarette, to no purpose as it afterwards proved; for the hour of victory was only clearly to show to the chivalrous Black Prince for what manner of a man he had spent his own energies and the blood of so many good knights.

¹ Du Guesclin surrendered to the Prince of Wales himself, according to Choisy.

"Je me rends au Prince, car c'est le plus hardi."

According to Ayala, the Castilians lost about four hundred men-at-arms¹ and seven thousand foot-soldiers. According to Froissart, the English only lost four knights and about sixty foot-soldiers.

This, even for a mediæval battle, seems, to say the least of it, a very moderate estimate.

When Don Pedro, exhausted and worn out with his furious pursuit, came at length to his English ally, he turned to thank him for the victory which had given him once again his kingdom.

"Yes," said the Prince of Wales, "you have gained the battle, but one might say that you have only gained it by spilling the blood of your own subjects. God has punished them for abandoning you; see that he does not punish you in your turn, if you do not change your conduct towards them."²

Don Pedro wished to embrace his knees, but Edward repulsed him, adding:—

"The victory is of God, not of me. To me you owe nothing; to him, all."

On the very morning of the day following the battle, the prisoners were led in review. Don Pedro was anxious that the Castilians should be placed in his hands.

"I will speak to them," he said with a sinister smile, "and will induce them to remain in my service. For if they should escape, or be ransomed by the enemy, I shall find them my very bitterest foes."

Edward, Prince of Wales, heard this singular remark—the promptings of Don Pedro's unquenchable spirit

¹ Mérimée says six hundred.

² Choisy, p. 155.

of revenge—and its effect was only to deepen that suspicion of the character of his ally, which he had lately begun to entertain. He denied the King of Castile any such right as his words implied, saying that the prisoners were his, and that not for any gold would he deliver them up for execution.

“If this be your determination,” cried Don Pedro, aroused and vexed, “I hold my kingdom more lost than it was to me yesterday. Your alliance has been useless, and it is in vain that I have expended my treasure in paying your men-at-arms.”

Thus did the dissent between the two princes grow.

Gravely the Prince of Wales answered that there were other means of recovering a kingdom than those by which Don Pedro had lost it. The Prince advised less of the old cruelty and severity, something more of kindness and charity.

“If,” he said impressively, “you return to your former courses, you will again peril your Crown, and neither my lord the King of England nor myself will be able to assist you—even should we have the desire.”

CHAPTER XXX

PENULTIMATE

DON PEDRO'S restoration was an affair of little duration, for it had in it no permanent qualities.

It is a poor thing among the princes of the earth that we see at the last in this crafty-eyed, pale, and treacherous debauchee.

Surely some murder-spirit sat among the ruins of his brain to poison him with such a furious and psychopathic desire of cruelty and death.

Don Pedro, in the final stages of his career, seems nothing more or less than a homicidal maniac—a degenerate, a *détraqué*.

After the victory of Najara the conquerors held a council in order to consider their plans, and at this meeting Don Pedro's old temper leapt out into the peace and security of the gathering.

The Prince of Wales made him a speech, in which he besought him to use clemency towards his subjects found in arms against him, for suspicion had gathered in the camp that Don Pedro was in the humour for a colossal massacre.

At such an hour, however, he was constrained to keep his bloodthirst unassuaged, and, with what good feeling he could summon, to answer his noble ally :—

“Fair cousin, I willingly grant your request.”

He then set out for Burgos, occupying several towns and castles on the way. A few days later he was followed by Prince Edward. Already the latter was beginning to hate his Spanish brother-in-arms, and to question himself about the wisdom of the whole campaign.

Arrived at the city of Burgos, the Prince took up his residence in the monastery of Las Huelgas, the name of the house wherein he had lodged when at Bordeaux. The Duke of Lancaster found shelter in a convent inside the city.

In a little while it became apparent that the restoration was for the time being secured ; the Commons of various towns sent representatives with professions of allegiance and loyalty ; Enrique was in France ; the countryside was still. At such an hour the goddess of reckoning raised her hands, and Edward put to Pedro the business side of the whole question.

He sought the promised payment for his accomplished task.

“Sir King,” he said, “you are now, thanks to God, lord over your country, and all rebellion is at an end. We, therefore, remain here at such very great expense that I must desire you will provide yourself with money sufficient to pay those who have replaced you in your kingdom, and that you now fulfil all the articles of the treaties which you have sworn to perform. We shall be obliged by your so doing as speedily as possible, which will be the more profitable to you, for you know

that men-at-arms will live, and, if they be not paid, will help themselves."

The King of Castile replied that he was in haste to settle his accounts and was most anxious to perform his promises punctually, so far as in his power lay, but that, a-lack ! he had no money. To remedy which state of things he would go to Seville—the city which was always his private bank—and gather a sufficiency there. Which done, he would surely return and pay his debts not later than Whitsuntide.

Edward accepted this reply with the philosophy which seems to come sooner or later to all creditors, and Don Pedro departed for Andalusia.

On his journey thither, he perpetrated a number of murders or executions, and in Cordova, Sir John Dillon says, he reverted to his old habit of *noctambule*, this time, however, not as a gallant but as an executioner. With a few companions, he entered in the middle of the night the houses of those who were under his ban, and, with the assistance of his friends, stabbed them as they slept.

Sixteen victims thus fell to this royal fancy in Cordova.

Enrique, who had narrowly escaped the soldiers of his brother in the flight after Navarette, had, meanwhile, gone into France. He was given shelter at Montpellier by the Comte de Foix, and secretly encouraged by Charles V. who saw with jealous eyes this new success of the English.¹

After a while, the Conde began to threaten the

¹ Ayala, 1367, Cap. XXIV.

frontiers of Aquitaine, which caused the Princess of Wales to write to the King of France protesting against this conduct. Charles, as yet unwilling to incur the anger of the Prince of Wales, whose success in Spain had been widely noised abroad in Europe, publicly ordered Don Enrique to refrain from annoying the subjects of his cousin Edward, but secretly abetted the object of his reproof.

We left that amusing old rogue and cynic, Carlos the Bad of Navarre, imprisoned by his own minion, Olivier de Mauny, in the Castle of Borja, awaiting the issue of war. When fortune declared for the English, Carlos thought that it was time to be on their side, and began to meditate how he could regain his freedom without satisfying his obligations to his amiable warder. He had promised Mauny the lordship of Gulbray and a considerable sum of money for his complaisance, but had no desire to pay his debts.

De Mauny was a man of some astuteness himself, as became a captain of Free Companies, but a man like Carlos, who invented, it is said, refinements of cruelty and depraved pleasure almost as remarkable as those of Nero, was not likely to want imagination in a simple case of avoiding payment.

He told De Mauny that if he would accompany him to Tuleda, the matter should be adjusted. As a pledge of good faith, he left one of his sons at Borja in the custody of the knight-adventurer.

At Tuleda, De Mauny was surrounded by the King's men and thrown into prison. A brother of his, in attempting his escape, was killed, and the knight

himself was only allowed his liberty on consenting to release Carlos' son.

Meanwhile, at Burgos, the fierce Spanish summer was creeping on, and illness and drunkenness broke out among the idle English troops. There was no sign of any fulfilment on Don Pedro's part of the various clauses of the treaty of Libourne. The Prince of Wales and his captains began to grow angry; they felt that they had been made the dupes of the crafty Castilian.

Edward himself, however, was sick, and the climate was rapidly thinning the ranks of his famous warriors. He determined to return to Aquitaine. Before he left, he extracted pledges from Don Pedro—who all along protested his willingness but incapacity to pay—that so much should be definitely contributed within four months and the balance within a year. To this end Edward was to hold the King's daughters as hostages.

The provinces of Biscay, which were to have been ceded according to the treaty, refused to recognise the English as their over-lords, and in this determination they received, no doubt, the secret encouragement of Don Pedro. Even Sir John Chandos was not allowed the honour of Lord of Soria, for, when he came to claim it, he found that the Castilian courts, ill-pleased that an Englishman should be so honourably investitured, placed the fees of the patent at so high a figure, that the honour and profit became a loss.

A somewhat remarkable conspiracy on the part of a vassal hitherto strongly attached to Don Pedro now arose.

The rebel and conspirator was Martin Lopez de Cordova, who had been the King's ambassador to Edward III. While appearing to further the King's interests in every way, Lopez was secretly organising a revolt among the Castilian nobility. To the *Ricos Hombres* and the *Hidalgos* he represented the painful condition of their sovereign: his distraught, unbalanced state, his maniacal ferocity, and his general unfitness to govern alone. He hinted at the establishment of a regency, a nominal regency, wherein all the power should be in the hands of the nobles. For the post of figure-head he suggested the Prince of Wales, "that perfect model of chivalry."

While the Prince was to be made regent of Castile, the kingdom was to be split into four parts, each of which should be governed absolutely by some noble of the land.

Naturally enough, in this prospective parcelling out, Lopez did no injustice to himself, for Murcia and Andalusia were, under this projected *régime*, to be governed by him.

Though the plot seems to have won a general approval among the lords of Castile, the English invasion, the unrest throughout the land, and perhaps some relics of fear for the newly-restored King, prevented matters from maturing to a definite end.

There seems to be no evidence that the Prince of Wales was ever approached on the subject of such an honorary regency as that suggested by Martin Lopez; he was never, at any rate, to have the chance of

exercising it, for the plot came to the ears of Don Pedro, and died still-born.

Lopez was lured to the castle of Martos and there imprisoned.¹ Only the request of Muhamad, King of Granada, now Don Pedro's only friend, saved his life.

Later, the King even restored Lopez to complete favour, so little could he afford to allow himself the vengeance of his earlier years.

Meanwhile, Castile was very unsettled and unhappy.

The restoration, built only on the armed support of an alien army, seems to have had little finality about it.

Nor did the taxes, thrust upon the people to provide—in theory, at any rate—the tributes to the English, make Don Pedro and his rule any the more popular.

Castile was traversed by foreigners in a way quite unknown to its peculiar nationality. There was much ransoming of prisoners after the departure of the English, and many notable warriors drifted back into France, Aragon or Aquitaine.

Bertrand du Guesclin, it must be remembered, had been taken prisoner at Navarette, and the story of his ransom is characteristic and amusing.

The green-eyed one, the ugly, flat-nosed Bertrand, for whom the charming Tiphaine Ruguenel was waiting in France, was not of a mind to remain overlong in idleness. And Charles, who knew him for his best lieutenant, was willing to pay his ransom, while there was gold in the treasuries of France. But the

¹ According to Ayala, Lopez was imprisoned simply for refusing to obey certain of the King's orders.

English had no wish to give back to the French their best general at a moment when their own authority in Aquitaine seemed to be undergoing a serious and subtle undermining. But Du Guesclin, who knew the character of the Prince well enough by this time and his susceptibility to a sentimental or theatrical appeal, resolved to direct an attack against it for the purpose of securing his own ransom.

At Bordeaux, Du Guesclin was nobly entertained, and passed much of his own time with the English Prince, whose character he thus had a good opportunity of studying.

One day Edward asked his prisoner if the sojourn at Bordeaux agreed with him.

"My lord," replied Bertrand, "I was never better in my life, and indeed I ought to be well, for I am, though your prisoner, the most honoured knight in the world as you must know."

"How so?" asked Edward.

"It is said in the kingdom of France," replied the astute Breton, "that you dare not set me free!"

The pride of the English Prince welled up at this stroke.

Edward seems to have been a rather simple fellow, for, at the taunt, all his common-sense deserted him, and the mere thought that he could be afraid of anyone living cast him into a welter of quixotic chivalry.

"Do you imagine, Messire Bertrand, that we stand in such dread of your prowess? Fix your own ransom. Let it be but a rush of straw, and I shall be satisfied."

Bertrand accepted the proposition eagerly. His end

gained, however, he did not hesitate to indulge in a little gasconade himself.

According to Cuvelier, he boasted that the women of France alone would unite to pay his ransom. "Not a single good house-wife," he declared, "that would not turn her wheel for me the whole year long." That he was also a generous man as well as a shrewd one we have evidence in the fact that he fixed his own ransom at a truly kingly figure.

We may be sure that the proud spirit of the Prince of Wales would not have complained had Du Guesclin fixed the ransom at some inconsiderable sum.

As it was, it was placed at a hundred thousand golden florins.¹ When the amount was fixed, Du Guesclin was offered the advance of considerable sums by the chivalrous knights who were his captors. Sir John Chandos, like the good man he was, offered the Breton the charity of his purse, for the purposes of his ransom. Du Guesclin thanked Sir John, but declined his generous offer. Charles V. was ready enough to find the money, and added to it indeed a further three thousand florins to pay for the journeys to and from his court. So Bertrand became free to join Don Enrique in the campaign for the final overthrow of Don Pedro of Castile.

¹ Ayala says that everyone thought the ransom would be small, "because Mosen Beltran de Claquin possessed nothing in the world but his own body."

CHAPTER XXXI

AND LAST

“ Thus with mortal gasp and quiver
While the blood in bubbles welled,
Fled the fiercest soul that ever
In a Christian bosom dwelled.”

—SIR WALTER SCOTT'S translation of
the *Ballad of Peter the Cruel*.

“ **I**N the quarter of the Occident between the mountains and the sea, there will arise a great black bird, cruel, carnivorous, insatiable for blood. It will seek only to devour all that which it encounters. All the honey of the world will never satisfy its hunger. It will engorge in its stomach all the gold and all the riches of the Universe. It will vomit what it has swallowed, and then return to its vomit. Yet not for all this shall it die. Its wings shall fail it, and all its feathers fall, and be dried in the sun. From door to door it shall go in search of an asylum, but no one will receive it. And it shall be obliged to creep into the woods, and to hide itself in the deepest shade and the thickest of forests, and then it shall die twice: once in the eyes of men, and once in the eyes of God. And this shall be its end.”

The above will be recognisable as a prophecy by

its vague and general terms, its fine soaring tone, and its lofty poetical disregard for detail.

The prophet responsible for the above prediction is Merlin of Arthurian fame, and, of course, the great black bird, for whom not "all the honey of the world" will suffice, is Don Pedro: Don Pedro, now fallen upon evil times, with all his sins sown in the soil sprung up and leering at him like a Cadmian brood.

This prophecy of Merlin was, according to Ayala, found in some chests belonging to the King after his death. With it was an exposition and reading of its meaning by a certain Benegatin, a famous Moor of Granada who quaintly styles himself Pedro's "little philosopher."¹

Pedro, it may be noticed, has somehow faded in the last few chapters, paled and faded in the lustre cast by knights like Edward and Du Guesclin. He has been made inconsiderable, but in his dying he becomes important again.

The stage is all his for his death, which took place in a manner and under conditions rare, if not unique, in the history of the kings of Europe.

When Enrique was preparing for his second invasion of Castile, Don Pedro found himself supported but indifferently well by those towns which had lately accepted his restoration.

His influence among the nobility was completely shattered. Only the Commons and the people were in any way prepared to support his cause. His chief friend, and the only one in whom he had any

¹ "Pequeño filosofo"—Ayala.

confidence, was the King of Granada. Surrounded always by a body-guard of Saracens, Pedro drifted unhappily about Andalusia, causing strange stories to be spread through his friendship with the Moors, so little beloved of the inhabitants of Castile. Thus it was commonly reported, that when the rumours of Trastamara's second coming were borne to him, the King of Castile swore to abjure the Christian faith and to become a Mahomedan if victory should fall to his arms. Then, too, it was that he reaped from the Arabian prophet's lips the foregoing gloomy prediction, which was duly fulfilled in all particulars.

In France, preparations were being hurriedly made for the second invasion of Castile. The English were much too fully occupied in defending their own lands in Guyenne, to render any further assistance to Don Pedro, even if they had so wished.

Enrique had, further, on his side Pope Urban.

Towards the middle of August, he set out for Castile, determined, on this occasion, as he said, to become its king, or never to return. To inspire his followers with something of his own confidence, he took with him his wife and son.

On the way he met with but little opposition. In Aragon, though Pedro IV. proffered a formal protest against his advance, as a matter of fact he did little or nothing to hinder the approach of the invaders.

Indeed, the King's uncle Don Pedro was plainly in favour of the Pretender, and assisted him with guides and forage.

All along the route, the country folk came out

to welcome Enrique as he passed, and his little column grew as it went into a considerable host. In Navarre, he found little or no opposition, and, crossing the Ebro near Azagra, he came at last into Castile.

And when his knights told him in what country he was then standing, he dismounted from his horse, cast himself upon his knees, and tracing a cross upon the sand, kissed it.

"By this cross," he declared to those standing by, "I swear that whatever dangers or troubles come to me, I will never again leave Castile alive. Here I await death or such better fortune as Heaven may have in store for me."

Calahorra, where a year before he had been crowned king, now received him with eagerness. Thither there came to him many of the men who, in the fortune of war, had been scattered at the battle of Najara. In this second coming of their leader, they saw an omen of ultimate success.

When his volunteers had reached a certain number, Enrique determined to take the bold step of marching on Burgos. From every castle and village on the way, knights and men came riding to join him, and signs of joy at his approach marked every instant of the advance.

Burgos declared for him, with the exception of the Jews, who shut themselves up in their Ghetto and prepared for a siege.

Thus, while Enrique's standard flew in one part of the town and he was receiving the homage and submission of the city's elders and the nobles of the

neighbourhood, a rain of hostile missiles poured from time to time on to his soldiers from the rebellious Jewry. These adherents of Don Pedro were, however, brought in a few days to submission, and Burgos and its environs became finally Enrique's.

During the happening of these events, Don Pedro was in Andalusia, where his presence sufficed to hold the countryside in a state of submission.

The news of the fall of Burgos was the signal for the final division of the land into two camps, each inspired with deadly hatred for the other and equally resolved that this time at least matters should be brought to a definite issue.

To Enrique's standard flocked from all over the country the victims of Don Pedro's tyranny, while the legitimate King of Castile was compelled to rely principally on his Moorish allies. He placed in the city of Carmona, under a strong guard, his treasure and the children whom he had had by his various mistresses. His daughters by Maria de Padilla were then living as hostages in the keeping of the Prince of Wales at Bayonne.

Then he began his last march through Castile to meet his brother. With him, besides his Granadine warriors, were some Castilian knights who were still faithful to him, among whom we find Ferdinand de Castro, one of the truest and most generous knights of the time. Some men from Galicia and Estremadura also rallied to the Royalist banner, and from the Andalusian cities of Seville, Ecija and Jerez he was able to collect a few reinforcements.

Enrique left some knights before the city of Toledo to continue the siege, and set out for the last encounter.

At the town of Orgaz, he was joined by Bertrand du Guesclin and some five hundred French cavalry, whom Charles V. had sent to his aid. The French king evidently placed considerable importance on the determination of the Castilian succession if he allowed himself to send to his ally his best general at a time when he was himself on the eve of a great struggle with England.

Eagerly and swiftly did the Bastard's army march through the land, until at last, outside Montiel, it was reported that Pedro's host was in sight.

The latter was taken unawares, and something like a panic spread through his camp at the almost supernatural swiftness of the enemy's approach. In the night there were desertions, and fear and dismay ran through all the ranks.

But there was no desire on Don Pedro's part to avoid the ultimate issue thus thrust on him. All his old fury and ferocity remained ; even if his power, authority, wisdom, and generalship had wholly left him.

We have Don Enrique's speech to his soldiers before the battle. "To-day, brave warriors," he said, "must decide for ever our fate. To-day will make us masters of a kingdom and cover us with glory and riches, or deprive us for ever of those things." And then he spoke to the listening knights and squires of the cruelties of his brother and foe, Don Pedro.

"Let us avenge to-day," he concluded, "our

country desolated by his violences. Avenge to-day the blood of your fathers, your children, and your friends, which this monster has so freely spent ! ”

And then the battle began with an appalling ferocity and vigour. On Enrique's side, the Bègue de Villaines was remarkable for his courage and daring. He sought all over the field for the nephew of the Moorish king, Belmavin, and when he found him, cut him in two with a great blow of his axe.

King Pedro fought with the most diabolical ferocity and fury, and reaped a full harvest of death with his battle-axe, which he wielded with great strength and skill.

Fortune soon declared itself for the Conde, and the Moors broke before the energetic assault of Du Guesclin's experienced knights. For a little while, the Castilian remnant of Pedro's army strove to mend the breach in the lines, but before long it became evident that the battle was hopelessly lost.

Then, with a few knights, Pedro escaped into the castle of Montiel, while the victors and the vanquished counted their dead.

When it was known where the King was, Enrique and Du Guesclin made immediate preparations to secure him, and tired though their men were, they compelled them forthwith to invest the place where Pedro was sheltering. And by the time that dark fell on the land, a circle of armed men surrounded the king's asylum so closely and circumspectly that “not even a bird might escape.” Then Enrique took his rest, with a quiet confidence in the morrow.

The closeness of the investment soon became apparent to Don Pedro, who thus perceived himself in the most desperate plight in the world, for, though the castle was safe against assault, there were provisions but for four days.

He soon recognised that his only chance lay in the possibility of an escape by night.

With the faithful De Castro, he discussed the matter, and at the dead of night, accompanied by eleven others, he set out to try and break through the cordon surrounding the castle.

Ayala, whose version of this final episode differs from that of Froissart and the other French chroniclers, writes that, before this Pedro had sent a knight of his, Rodriguez de Senabria, to treat secretly with Du Guesclin.

The Castilian chronicler tells how this man came by stealth into the Breton's tent by night, and sought with every artifice and fair promise to seduce Du Guesclin from his alliance with Enrique.

"I, for my own part," said Senabria, "do conjure you to have pity on so noble a king. Think how it will reflect to your honour, when all the world knows that to you alone he owes his life."

Further, on behalf of his royal master, the envoy offered the towns of Soria, Almazan, Atienza, Diza, and Seron together with two hundred thousand doubloons of Castilian gold in return for his assistance.

Bertrand was indignant at the whole request, and told the knight that he made a mistake in thinking he was addressing a traitor.

"I am in the pay of King Henry," he added.

Rodriguez refused to take his dismissal until he had extracted from Du Guesclin a promise to consider Don Pedro's proposals.

When Senabria had gone, the Breton General called his knights round him, and told them what had happened. He asked them their advice as to whether he should communicate the news to King Henry.

It was a point of chivalric honour for them to decide, and they all agreed readily enough, that he could owe no consideration whatever to Don Pedro or his messenger, and would assuredly be right in acquainting his own lord with the circumstance.

Du Guesclin accepted the decision of his comrades, and forthwith went to King Henry, and told him the whole story. So pleased was the bastard with the loyalty of his lieutenant, that he promised him both the lordships and the money which Don Pedro had offered.

At the same time, Enrique urged that Du Guesclin should appear to accept the advances made by Senabria, and conspire to entice Don Pedro into their camp.

For, according to Mérimée, the Pretender had already determined to bring about the death of his brother. Only by his death could he hope to establish himself securely upon the throne ; a Pedro in captivity would have been little better than a Pedro openly in arms against him.

And, if Ayala's account be the true one—and there seems no reason why it should not be so—the fact of Enrique's unwillingness to wait even for a day or two for famine to deliver up his brother to him points to

the suggestion that he did desire his death. In such an adventure as he was urging Du Guesclin to contrive, a sudden, almost accidental death would be entirely possible and natural, while to murder his brother in cold blood would have been difficult as well as perhaps even repugnant to Enrique's nature. Whether by invitation of Du Guesclin or not—and for my own part, I think that, though there may have been invitations, this sortie was spontaneous—certain it is that on the 23rd March 1369, at midnight or so, Pedro and his eleven comrades stole out of the castle of Montiel. It was very dark, and round the shoes of their horses all had bound cloth. The escaping party led their mounts down the steep hill on which the castle stood, until they reached ground where they could ride them. Don Pedro was wearing a coat of mail instead of his usual dress—does not this and the binding of the horses' feet suggest an attempt at flight?—and all moved stealthily, making the least possible sound. Froissart says that the Bègue de Villaines had the command of the watch with 300 men.¹

Quietly as they were moving, the sound of their approach did not escape the French knight's ears.

"Gentlemen," he said to his comrades, "keep quiet; make no movement! for I hear the steps of some people. I suspect they are victuallers who are bringing provisions to the castle, for I know it is in this respect very scantily provided."

¹ Ayala says that the scene passed in Du Guesclin's tent. He, Froissart, and the other French chroniclers all vary as to the details of this last episode.

Then, as the little column drew near, the Bègue, "with his dagger on his wrist," seized the bridle of one of the strangers and addressed him :—

"Who art thou? Speak, or thou art a dead man!"

The fellow happened to be an Englishman, who, wrenching his bridle free, dashed off in the darkness.

The Bègue de Villaines was now aroused; and with his men's help he grasped the bridle of the next man's horse, and scanned his features closely with the aid of what little light there was.

And in the man's face he fancied that he saw a likeness to Don Enrique, and he thought that it must be Don Pedro himself.

So he placed his dagger on the man's breast, and cried out :—

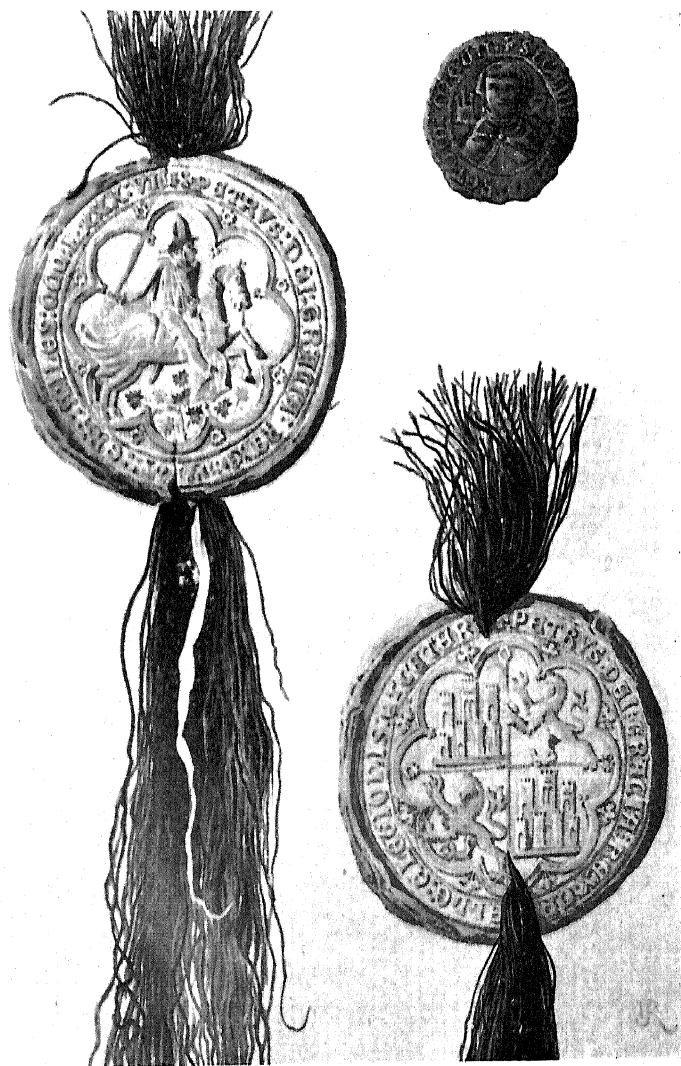
"And you, who are you? Name yourself and surrender this instant, or you are a dead man."

And Don Pedro, seeing himself thus surrounded and lost, answered :—

"Bègue, Bègue, I am Don Pedro, King of Castile, to whom much wrong has been imputed, through evil counsellors. I surrender myself and all my people, but twelve in number, as thy prisoners. I beseech thee, in the name of gentility, that thou put me in a place of safety. I will pay for my ransom whatever sum thou shalt please to ask, for, thank God, I have yet a sufficiency to do that, but thou must prevent me from falling into the hands of the bastard."¹

But it was the hour of Don Enrique, and there was

¹ Froissart.



SEAL OF PETER THE CRUEL ; AND GOLD COIN OF HIS CURRENCY
(IN RIGHT-HAND TOP CORNER)

no more hope and no more chances left in all the world for Peter the Cruel.

The Bègue took no notice of his prayers, and treated his promises with silent scorn. He led the King, followed by some of his men, to a tent near by, whither rumour of his capture brought several of the leaders of King Henry's army. These formed a circle round Don Pedro, as though anxious to see at last the man who had made such strife and desolation in Europe.

There was a strange silence upon all. It seemed as though they were expecting something to happen. The knight-companions stood regarding Don Pedro as if he were some kind of wild beast, until the curtain of the tent was drawn on one side, and Don Enrique entered fully armed, with visor up.

The brothers had not seen each other since they were children. Enrique did not, it seems, in the half-light of the tent, recognise his brother at first as his eyes strayed over the faces of the captives from Montiel.¹

"Where then is this bastard who calls himself King of Castile?" he asked.

"There," answered a knight, "there stands your mortal enemy!"

"Yes, I am. I am, and always will be. All the world knows I am the legitimate son of King Alfonso. Thou art the bastard!"

At this insult, wilfully provoked, Enrique struck Don Pedro lightly on the face with his dagger. The injured man, closely pressed by the onlookers, had no

¹ Ayala says that the two brothers stumbled against each other in the dark.

room to draw his sword, so he seized his brother in his arms, and sought to bear him to the ground.

Fiercely the two men wrestled and fought for their lives, while the spectators, hushed by the strange and unusual sight, made way for them as they swung about the tent.

Pedro was the stronger of the two, and when the closely-locked fighters came to the ground at last over a camp bed, it was he who was uppermost. A great gasp of excitement was drawn from those present, for they saw Pedro feeling in his belt for a poignard. His arms, gripped by his brother, prevented him, at first, from drawing the blade, but when Enrique, weakened by the struggle, seemed to be giving his opponent the arm-play necessary for him to draw the poignard, some one of the onlookers, aghast at the turn of things, went to the aid of his master. He seized Pedro by the leg, and twisted him over, so that Enrique had the advantage. And as the Conde struggled for position, his hand touched his own dagger which had fallen on to the floor in the fight. Then, lifting Pedro's mail at a vulnerable point, he plunged it fiercely two or three times into him.

Who the offender against fair play was is a matter of many opinions, but his action made the small tent blaze immediately with a swift and fearful carnage.

The fight became almost general, and two Englishmen, the Green Knight and James Roland, were killed for attempting to defend Don Pedro. Enrique, after the first blows, felt his brother's arms slipping from

him, and rising, called on some of his men to finish his handiwork for him.

“ Thus,” as Froissart says, “ died Don Pedro, King of Castile, who had formerly reigned in great prosperity.”

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